A Dyadic Analysis of Undergraduate Peer-Mentoring Relationships in the Context of a Formal Peer-Mentoring Programme at a University Residence

by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the potential reciprocal growth in undergraduate peer-mentoring relationships in the context of a formal peer-mentoring programme at a first-year university residence from a dyadic relational perspective. The investigation adopted a case study research design to study four dyads from a relational point of view within the context of a formal peer-mentoring programme at a university residence. The study used purposive selection procedures to identify actively participating dyads that could contribute to providing a rich description of the research problem. The study was premised on the assumption that, as a reciprocal relationship, peer mentoring is an effective means of facilitating the transition from school to university, and that universities have a joint responsibility in this regard. At the end of the mentorship year, a semi-structured, in-depth interview covering both the psychosocial and academic issues related to their experiences was conducted from a relational perspective with each of the four dyads to harvest their perceptions and lived experiences as participants. Finally, the interviews were processed and subjected to monadic as well as dyadic analysis to develop an understanding of the internal dynamics of each mentoring dyad.

The study addressed a number of lacunae, such as the paucity of theoretically underpinned research and mentoring theories in student-peer mentoring, by introducing into peer-mentoring research the triple theoretical framework of *social constructionism* (constructing meaning by acknowledging the value of a sense of social *inter*dependence as opposed to individual independence), *relational theory* (acknowledging the reciprocal nature of the mentoring relationship rather than focussing on the single perspective of the mentor or mentee), and the *principles of Ubuntu* (an African cultural belief system stressing the value of relational interdependence for existence, the importance of family and extended family support, and spirituality).

In exploring the theoretical challenges endemic in peer-mentoring research, the study examined role-model theory, attribution theory, attachment theory, and involvement and social integration theories to abstract and highlight elements pertinent to the field of peer-mentoring research. In addition, the study developed a multi-perspective development

process for the selection of theories; a theoretical framework for the analysis and interpretation of the data using the computer program ATLAS.ti., as well as a dyadic process for analysing mentoring dyads both from a monadic and dyadic perspective. Finally, the study recontextualised and expanded the meaning of key concepts culled from the literature for use in future peer-mentorship research. Given the rich perspective this study provided on the reciprocal nature and dynamics of peer mentorship on the theoretical, conceptual and practical levels, the research has made a contribution to raising awareness of this crucial field, which could stem the relentless tide of costly attrition.

Key words: case study research, social constructionism, dyadic analysis, mentoring dyad, monadic analysis, peer-mentoring, reciprocal relationship, relational perspective, relational theory, social interdependence, student-peer mentoring.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie verken die potensiële wedersydse groei in voorgraadse portuurgroepverhoudinge in die konteks van formele portuurgroep-mentorprogramme by ŉ eerstejaar-universiteitskoshuis vanuit ‘n diadiese perspektief. Die ondersoek maak gebruik van gevallestudie as navorsingsontwerp om vier diades binne die konteks van ‘n formele portuurgroep-mentorprogram by ‘n enkele universiteitskoshuis vanuit ‘n verhoudingsperspektief te bestudeer. Daar is van doelgerigte seleksie gebruik gemaak om aktiefdeelnemende diades te identifiseer wat ‘n deeglike beskrywing van die navorsingsprobleem kon lewer. Die studie gaan van die veronderstelling uit dat portuurgroepondersteuning as ‘n wedersydse verhouding ‘n effektiewe manier is om die oorgang van die skool na universiteit te fasiliteer en dat universiteite ‘n gesamentlike verantwoordelikheid het in dié verband. Aan die einde van die mentorskapjaar is ‘n semi-gestruktureerde in-diepte onderhoud wat sowel die psigososiale en akademiese aspekte wat verband hou met hulle ervarings gedek het, vanuit ‘n verhoudingsperspektief met elkeen van die vier diades gevoer om hulle persepsies en belewings op te teken. Uiteindelik is die onderhoude geprosesseer en onderwerp aan sowel monadiese- as diadiese analise om ‘n begrip te ontwikkel van die interne dinamika van elke mentorpaar.

Die studie het ‘n aantal leemtes probeer beredder soos die gebrek aan teoreties gefundeerde navorsing en mentorteorieë ten opsigte van portuurgroepondersteuning deur ‘n drievoudige teoretiese raamwerk van *sosiale konstruksionisme* (om betekenis te konstrueer deur die waarde van ŉ sin van sosiale interafhankliheid eerder as individuele onafhanklikheid te erken), *relasionele teorie* (die erkenning van die wedersydse aard van die mentorverhouding eerder as om op die enkelperspektief van die mentor of persoon wat gementor word te fokus) en die beginsels van *Ubuntu* (’n kulturele geloofsisteem wat klem lê op verhoudingsinterafhanklikheid vir bestaan, die belangrikheid van familie en uitgebreide familie-ondersteuning en spiritualiteit) aan te wend. In ‘n poging om die teoretiese uitdagings endemies aan die navorsing van portuurmentorskap te beskryf, het die studie rolmodelteorie, gehegtheidsteorie en betrokkenheid- en sosiale integrasieteorieë ondersoek om die elemente eie aan die veld van portuurgroepondersteuning te abstraheer en te belig. Daarby het die studie ŉ multiperspektief-ontwikkelingsproses daargestel vir die seleksie van teorieë; ŉ teoretiese raamwerk vir die singewingsproses van datahantering

deur die rekenaarprogram ATLAS.t.i., sowel as ’n diadiese proses vir die analisering van mentordiades vanuit sowel ’n monadiese- as diadiese perspektief. Laastens het die studie die betekenis van sleutelkonsepte wat in die literatuur voorkom, gerekontekstualiseer en verbreed vir gebruik in toekomstige navorsing oor portuurmentorskap. Gegewe die ryk perspektief wat hierdie studie verskaf op die wedersyde aard en dinamika van portuurmentorskap op teoretiese, konseptuele en praktiese vlakke, het dit ‘n bydrae gemaak tot ’n verhoogde bewustheid van hierdie baie belangrike veld en sal moontlik in die toekoms die groot uitvalsyfer onder studente kan teëwerk.

Sleutelwoorde: Gevallestudie-navorsing, sosiale konstruksionisme, diadiese analise, *mentordiade*, monadiese analise, portuurmentorskap, wedersydse verhouding, relasionele teorie, sosiale interafhanklikheid, student-portuurberading.

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i am but a small voice, and i thank my God for His grace and love that enabled me to release and mould that voice into this dissertation.

DEDICATION

A dissertation?
Yes, but also a tribute
to the memory of my late parents
whom I owe a deep and loving debt of gratitude.

Mom you gave me life –
and then you lived for me;
Dad you gave me hope –
and then you dreamed for me.
You are at the core of me
And because you are
Therefore I am.

RECOGNITION

This dissertation is not the work of one person but the influence and wisdom of many people who crossed my path and left me with a deep and humbling understanding of how I became because of them. This study is therefore a testimony to life from which I drank the bitter medicine of pain to be elated in moments of joy and growth—all of these experiences were equally valid and necessary to fill the crevices of my brokenness and sharpen the synapses of my mind and brain as I engaged with his study and finally consigned it to pen and print, free to start afresh on a new adventure of learning and growing. I thank my God.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

> "To be human is to engage in relationships with others and with the world. It is to experience the world as an objective reality, independent of oneself, capable of being known … but man's separateness from and openness to the world distinguishes him as a being of relationships."
>
> (Paulo Freire 1987:3)

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The South African higher education scenario has changed significantly since the first democratic elections in 1994. Now, twenty years later, student enrolments have almost doubled as institutions of higher learning have become more accessible to students from all sectors of the population (HESA 2014). The problem is that the institutionalised racism and discrimination of the former apartheid regime resulted in an inequitable distribution of national resources and the systematic underfunding of segregated educational and other institutions designed especially for the so-called 'non-white' population groups in the country. The effects of this system of racial and social discrimination, which permeated every aspect of South African society, resulted in significant disparities in educational standards between the different population groups, the effects of which are now becoming glaringly and painfully obvious as large numbers of students from previously disadvantaged communities (Loots 2009) gain entry to universities and other institutions of higher learning (Mammen 2012). This poses serious new challenges for universities because of a systemic imbalance between the available funding, the higher enrolment or access rates, and the expected throughput or success rates needed to facilitate the development of a more equitable South Africa (HESA 2014). As Harding (2013) rightly points out, the escalation in demanding student expectations globally presents an increasingly challenging context for higher education.

There is increasing concern about the low success and completion rates of university students in South Africa, which represents a loss of talent and financial resources (HESA 2014). The organisation further states that South Africa has a graduation rate of 17%, which is one of the lowest rates worldwide. There is a 40% drop-out rate of South African students in their first year at university (see Bitzer 2009). These high student drop-out and failure rates pose a serious threat to a nation engaged in the difficult process of trying to

build a democracy in a context fraught with difficulties such as a shortage of high-level skills, limited resources, and the broad-based pressure of mass poverty and unemployment. It is important to note that 50% of the first-year dropouts occur in the first six weeks (Essack 2006). According to Palmer, O'Kane and Owens (2009), it is critical that first-year students develop a sense of belonging during the first six to eight weeks as this could determine whether or not they stay or drop out. This period I refer to as the critical period in my study.

The drop-out rate remains high despite the positive outlook of most students when they commence university study. Scutter *et al*. (2011) point out that many students find the transition from school to higher education very challenging (Miller & Kay 2002; Budny, Paul & Newborg 2010). In a South African study, Essack (2006) found that students were overwhelmed on entering university and that the university, the people, language and institutional culture evoked feelings of alienation in them. South African students are additionally confronted with a number of psychological, social and academic challenges (Holt & Berwise 2012) which are exacerbated by their low levels of preparedness and socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Loots 2009; Mammen 2012).

Steenkamp, Baard and Frick (2009) state that universities are continually becoming more diversified internationally as student populations increasingly change. In his reflections on undergraduate science students, Coppola (2001:57) comments on the challenge of the multicultural nature of universities and introduces the notion of a multicultural multiversity. These 'multiversities' have become cultural crossroads that pose a number of challenges to first-year students. Since 1994, the former primarily ethnic universities have been transformed into sites of increasing and challenging multicultural realities locally (see HESA 2014). This does not only pose great possibilities for growth and development but also contributes to traumas of transition (if not mediated by universities). The literature seems to indicate that social integration and proper academic self-management are the two most prominent traumas of transition (Gibney *et al.* 2011; Smails & Gannon-Leary 2011). In my study, I addressed these as well as other related challenges such as relationships, independence, the transition to university, and responsibility, referred to as stressors (Darling *et al.* 2007). Researchers such as Smith, Carmack and Titsworth (2006) posit that transition to higher education is highly stressful as students have to make major adjustments that demand the negotiation of new roles which create an ongoing need for dependence on those around them.

The literature suggests that the people who are the closest to first-year students and in the best position to provide support during the transition phase are their peers (Budny *et al.* 2010; Rosenthal & Shinebarger 2010; Smails & Gannon-Leary 2011). My study follows the position posited by Haggard *et al.* (2011), namely that peers mentoring peers is a strong source of social support and friendship and consequently an effective way of assisting first-year students to effect the transition from high school to university. The reason is that peers prefer peers (Beltman & Schaeben 2012). Abrahamson and Barter (2011) agree that peer mentoring is one of the most effective ways of helping first-year students to address the challenges of transition to higher education. In terms of the challenges facing South African higher education in general and first-year students in particular, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, mentoring and peer-mentoring programmes (Loots 2009) are crucial if universities want to contribute meaningfully to a transformed and equitable South Africa (Geber & Nyajom 2009).

In peer-mentoring relationships, the degree of satisfaction and the amount of the contact peer mentees experience, as well as the quality of these relationships, are crucial in mediating the transition from high school to university (Roszkowski & Badmus 2014). Indeed, there appears to be fairly widespread consensus that, in the experience of first-year university students, it is the quality of the peer-mentoring relationship that directly and positively influences the transition to higher education (see Tinto 1975; Austin 1996; Ender & Newton 2000; Harmon 2006). My own findings strongly support this conclusion.

Kram and Isabella (1985:110) similarly conclude that peer mentors, because of a closer proximity in age and hierarchical levels, can serve as "true mentors" providing psychosocial and academic support. The authors aver that this type of support mediates transition and results in retention and completion. Rosenthal and Shinebarger (2010) also support this view. This clearly accounts for the increased interest in and the use of mentoring programmes in academic contexts (Power *et al*. 2011; Brondyk & Searby 2013) as a way of addressing issues such as transition and induction (Gannon & Maher 2012). However, in spite of this proliferation of interest in writing and research on the topic (Rekha and Ganesh 2012; Brondyk and Searby 2013), there is as yet no clear definition of the concepts of mentoring and peer mentoring. Haggard *et al.* (2011) conclude that researchers find it challenging to define the concepts of mentoring and peer mentoring, which has given rise to a situation where there is not only a lack of agreement on what the

concepts mean, but where they mean different things to the same writer or are not defined for the purposes of the research or article in which they are used. Haggard *et al.* (2011), in their review of the evolving definitions of mentoring, identify no fewer than four different definitions. It follows that the universities' inability to define *mentoring* consistently is still persisting (Budge 2006). A number of writers comment on the definitional confusion surrounding the concept of peer mentoring and blame this situation on the dearth of research in this area (Holt & Berwise 2012).

In exploring the personal attributes of a mentor, Haggard *et al.* (2011) propose the following core attributes: reciprocity, developmental benefits, and consistent interactions. They also emphasise the important influence of context or setting on peer relationships. Rekha and Ganesh (2013) add that peer mentoring relationships are essentially personal. These attributes are consonant with the theoretical frameworks of social constructionism, relational cultural theory, and Ubuntu adopted for my study.

If one invokes Freire's view, as encapsulated in the epigraph preceding this chapter, that "[t]o be human is to engage in relationships with others and the world", then peer mentoring, which is essentially a human enterprise, is to a great extent informed by the quality of the relationship. It is engaging with the other in an 'alien' world that proves so daunting to the first-year students new to the university (Budney *et al.* 2010, Scutter *et al.* 2011). Rekha and Ganesh (2013) remind us that peer-mentoring relationships present unique interpersonal experiences that engage both parties in a dyad which creates the expectation that studies about mentoring would look at the lived experiences (outcomes) of both parties in the context of the peer-mentoring relationship. According to Gannon and Maher (2012) this, however, seldom seems to be the case. Holt and Berwise (2012) raise a further concern that there is a serious need for more theoretically based research in peer mentoring in higher education. They also claim that there have been no studies in peer-mentoring programmes in higher education focusing on the correlation between peer mentors' and peer mentees' relationships. Gannon and Maher (2012) report that most research on mentoring focus mainly on benefits accruing to mentors. This is a monadic perspective whereas my study assumed a dyadic stance.

There also seems to be a better fit between studies in peer mentoring using qualitative data, given that one deals with human interaction that demands a 'voice' for the participants (subjects) in the analysis and negotiation of meaning of these peer-mentoring relationships.

The literature on mentoring research seems to veer in the opposite direction. Most studies, especially those conducted in the USA, employ quantitative data in monadic research on mentoring.

The apparent over-reliance on single perspective studies—focusing either on the mentor or the mentee—manifests itself as one of the key limitations in the practice of peer mentoring research. Monadic studies also lose sight of the complex nature of mentoring (Scanlon 2009) which creates the situated interactive locus of growth and possibility in which the peer-mentoring dyads function. There have been attempts at a more bi-perspectival approach to peer-mentoring research, such as the extensive comparative study based on the experiences of peer mentors and first-year mentees conducted by Holt and Berwise in 2012. They argue that a better understanding of the mentor-mentee dynamic will give us a deeper insight into the effectiveness levels across participants in peer-mentoring programmes and therefore employed a mixed-method approach in their study. Their research, however, was not dyadic with a one-on-one pairing of mentors and mentees through which to explore the relationships. They grouped the participants in their respective groups, with the mentors and mentees reporting on their collective experiences. The study thus aggregated the experiences of the groups (mentors and mentees) for comparison. The result was that they could not infer causality because of the correlational nature of their data (Holt & Berwise 2012). A survey was conducted by Roszkowski and Badmus (2014) in which they explored the extent to which mentees would be interested in becoming mentors. This was also a correlational study in which mentee experiences were pooled and could therefore not be used to capture the inter-relational complexities and their effects on the dyadic partners.

Contextual factors are clearly crucial to peer-mentoring research (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland 2007). The dyadic relationship is the primary context and is embedded in a peer-mentoring programme. In my study, the dyads were located in a formal peer-mentoring programme based in two first-year residences at a university. Formal programmes have been acknowledged as serving vital roles in assisting with transition (McManus & Russel 2007), and that students living in residential settings develop a greater understanding of their academic context through peer influence (Torres & Lepeau 2013). My study explored the dyadic peer-mentoring relationships in the context of a formal peer-mentoring programme at two first-year residences of a historically disadvantaged university. This created a unique opportunity in peer-mentoring research which was further enhanced by

the application of Ubuntu (an African philosophy stressing the sociocultural interrelatedness of all human interactions as discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, Section 2.4) as a theoretical framework in a dyadic relational study.

The conceptual setting of the peer-mentoring dyad as the unit of analysis is critical to an understanding of the outcomes of the study. Firstly, the theoretical context is constituted by social constructionism, relational cultural theory, the philosophy of Ubuntu (discussed in Chapter 2), as well as social theories (as discussed in Chapter 5). The institutional context of my research was a historically disadvantaged university which mostly attracted students from impoverished backgrounds both locally and from elsewhere on the African continent. Most of the beneficiaries in my programme setting were first-generation university students. The institution had consequently developed a close understanding of the plight of these students and the challenges that both they and the university faced to ensure access for success. The residential peer-mentoring programme was an example of a response in this regard. At the time of the research, an increasing number of foreign students (mostly from elsewhere on the African continent) formed part of the student demographics. This had developed a strong continental interconnectedness creating a contextual multiversity that was both enriching and challenging. Finally, the student demographics, the broad range of inequalities and disadvantage, and the varying levels of preparedness posed a special challenge to the peer-mentoring programme and created a dynamic context for the peer-mentoring dyads of my study.

Peer-mentoring programmes as an intervention for first-year transition help students to develop a sense of belonging and improve retention (Beltman & Schaeben 2012). Transition programmes based in residential contexts promote a greater understanding of the university context. The benefits of residentially located mentoring programmes remain largely unexplored for students participating on different levels (Torres & LePeau 2013). My study was a response to this lacuna in the literature.

The duration of the residentially based peer-mentoring programme of this study was one full academic year. It was essentially a one-on-one dyadic relationship between a first-year student and a more advanced senior undergraduate second- or third-year-level student located in the residences to create proximity. It was a formal and compulsory programme for all first-year residential students. Peer mentors completed an application the previous year and were then interviewed by the coordinator (researcher) and were selected on the

basis of academic achievement and psychosocial and interpersonal skills. The peer mentors acted as the *significant others* and were close in age to familiarise the mentees with the inside story of the university as they developed a sense of belonging and became mutually interdependent together with their mentors. Mentors attended one-on-one meetings with their mentees at least twice a month or more frequently, when necessary (see Appendix 7).

The programme provided the dyadic space for participants to develop trust, confidence, reciprocity and mutual growth, psychosocially and academically. In this way, the programme assisted the dyads in developing a deep sense of relational inter-connectedness in their co-construction of themselves, others and their contextual realities. I refer to the process that creates this kind of peer-mentoring support awareness as *peer-mentoring consciousness*, which derives from Freire's (1987) notion of *conscientization.*

Wittenborn *et al.* (2013) purport that dyadic research design is uniquely suited to the exploration of relational concepts such as reciprocity, mutuality and inter-dependence. My findings indicated that the peer-mentoring dyads as loci of growth and development had contributed to the more effective transition, personal growth, self-construction and relationship development of the participants. The uniqueness of the study was to be found not in the peer-mentoring programme but in its residential setting and the dyadic relational approach as the locus of investigation. The study was not only an invitation to engage in more explicit discussions of contextual factors such as setting (in my case, first-year university residences) as advocated by Haggard *et al.* (2011) but an appeal to accept the consciousness of the centrality of the dyadic process in peer mentoring through which one develops a richer understanding of the complex dynamic interpersonal context.

The criticality of inter-human relationships as a seminal feature of our humanness is reflected in the crucial position of the relationship dimension in the mentoring process. This dimension speaks of engaging with the other and the world in a Freirian sense. It is in this understanding that the dyadic partners redefine themselves, construct their "world" and respond to the real challenges of first-year university life. It is thus important to move away from an individuated self towards an interactional process of connectedness.

1.2 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

My study was based on the premise that peer-mentoring is essentially a complex, reciprocal relationship that presents unique interpersonal experiences. My research was

also informed by the understanding that a peer-mentoring relationship is not the product of a programme but a process of growth and becoming in a reciprocal and interpersonal shared space of possibilities. It thus demands a shift from the individuated self to the dyad as a unit of analysis.

This shift is a response to the gap in mentoring research identified by Clutterbuck (2003), who states that he finds it remarkable that few studies have attempted to '"measure" the outcomes for both parties in the mentoring dyad. Some 12 years ago, Beyene (2002) had expressed concern that an investigation into mentoring should adopt a relational approach. This is equally applicable to peer-mentoring.

This notion of dyadic interperspectivity is highlighted by Dutton (2003:3) when she remarks that few researchers have "measured" the depth of or the benefits to be experienced by being part of the mentoring process. This is an omission in the research literature that I have attempted to address in the context of peer-mentoring. It also calls to mind the dearth in dyadic research on formal peer mentoring located in higher education.

Finally, given the appropriateness of using qualitative data in mentoring, I adopted a case study approach which, I argue, is consonant with the nature of the mentoring process. According to the literature cited earlier, there emerged a concern about the lack of, or at the very least, the paucity of mentoring research that is theoretically based or framed. I therefore introduced social constructivism, relational theory and the principle of Ubuntu from African philosophy as key theoretical frameworks within which peer mentoring dyads were explored.

1.3 PURPOSE STATEMENT

My purpose with this study was to explore the potential reciprocal growth in undergraduate peer-mentoring relationships in the context of a formal peer-mentoring programme at two first-year university residences from a dyadic relational perspective.

My study was located in two university first-year residences (see Appendices 7 and 8) and I utilised a relational theoretical perspective to explore peer mentoring and lived experiences in the dyadic context.

The key research question was therefore formulated as follows:

How, if at all, do undergraduate peer-mentoring relationships within the context of a residentially based undergraduate peer-mentoring programme contribute to the reciprocal growth of the dyadic partners?

The answer to this question depended on the answers to the following sub-questions:

1.4 SUBSIDIARY QUESTIONS

- What are the key components of peer-mentoring?
- How do undergraduate peer-mentoring partners construct themselves and their roles in a peer-mentoring dyad in the context of a residentially based peer-mentoring programme in higher education?
- How are reciprocity and equality manifested in undergraduate peer-mentoring dyads in the context of a residentially based peer-mentoring programme in higher education?

1.5 POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

My study derived its significance from its potential to address critical lacunae in mentoring research literature. These lacunae I identified by exploring the literature and identifying an opportunity to make a contribution towards addressing these lacunae to some extent. I attempted to address the above lacunae by examining mentoring specifically from a higher education perspective. The focus was on the transition of high school students to higher education in the context of a mentoring programme located in two university first-year residences for first-year students.

Firstly, I set out to develop a theoretical framework for peer mentoring in higher education. Secondly, I investigated formal peer-mentoring dyads located in mentoring programmes for residentially based first-year university students. In this way, I tried to contribute to a better understanding of the value of such mentoring relationships and how they assisted in facilitating the transition from high school to higher education. I also addressed the paucity of dyadic approaches to mentoring research, and equally important, attempted to respond to the dearth of theoretically based and framed mentoring research.

Conceptually, the study contributed towards the development of a theoretical framework for peer mentoring that could be applied in research on mentoring in higher education. The

study also contributed towards putting down markers for the development of mentoring theories in higher education which may enhance the understanding of the role of mentoring in facilitating students' transition to higher education. Finally, my study provided guidelines for the development of mentoring programmes that would assist students in making the transition to higher education from a school context.

1.6 ETHICAL STATEMENT

The research was conducted with the informed consent of the Director of Student Development and Catering Services, the residence staff and the research participants of the institution where the study took place (see Appendix 2). I gave the undertaking that all data would be treated confidentially and that anonymity would be ensured during the entire research process. At no time was the image of the university compromised. The data collected were used for academic research purposes only.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research was located within an interpretive paradigm. A social constructionist approach was adopted in the study and relational theory and the principle of Ubuntu were used as a framework to analyse qualitative data on the development of students in mentoring dyads.

I adopted the case study design because it is a widely held belief that case studies are appropriate in the study of human affairs (Stake 1978). The questions of mentoring and transition from school to higher education deal with the human experiences of the mentoring dyads. The case study design thus presented itself as a design of choice. Case studies can also be utilised in a qualitative approach (Eisenhardt 1989; Miles & Huberman 2002; Yin 1999 & 2009). The case study design seemed to be an appropriate design to utilise in my study. I prefer the term 'case study research' (CSR) as used by Woodside (2010) and Day-Ashley (2013) as it is more in line with the notions of my research design and avoids the confusion potentially inherent in 'case study' and 'case' as two distinct terms. CSR also deals with a case as a whole and goes into detail (Denscombe 2011), which makes it possible to explore the relationships between the processes and relationships in the mentoring dyads.

The research literature was used to assist in understanding the variety of relationships that can be formed during mentoring and to give form and shape to the collection and the analysis of the data. The mentoring dyad constituted the unit of analysis which I analysed and explored.

I selected four dyads representing students from four different faculties (Arts, Community and Health, Economic and Management Sciences and Faculty of Law) and applied purposeful selection techniques. The main motivation was to select participants who could shed optimal light on the issue under investigation, namely mentoring as a process to assist first-year residence students studying for different degrees at one institution in their transition from secondary to tertiary education. The critical selection criterion was that each research participant was required to have been active for the duration of the mentoring programme in a functional mentoring dyad for the full academic year.

A semi-structured, in-depth interview was conducted with each of the eight mentors and mentees (4 dyads) at the end of the mentoring programme. These interviews focused on the perceptions and lived experiences of the participants in the mentoring dyads and covered both the psychosocial and academic issues related to their experiences.

The interviews were transcribed by an experienced transcriber. The transcriptions were done verbatim with the retention of the tokens and fillers of the spoken text. These transcriptions were then converted to rich text files (rtf) and coded to protect the identity of the interviewees. The rtf format is supported by ATLAS.ti, a CAQDAS (computer-aided qualitative data analysis software) program utilised in this research. I then identified themes and conducted a thematic analysis. I performed both a monadic as well as a dyadic analysis to develop an understanding of the internal dynamics of each mentoring dyad.

1.8 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

My study only focused on first-year students and their mentors who lived at first-year residences of one university. The study did not evaluate the mentoring programme as such but rather analysed the transition to higher education and the development of students in the mentoring programme from a relational dyadic perspective. Only four peer mentoring dyads were selected for this purpose.

As stated, the study was located in a formal and compulsory mentoring programme at first-year university residences at one university for the duration of a full academic year. Only the dyadic perspectives of mentor-mentee relationship were observed. I did not carry out any comparisons of mentors or mentees, nor did my study specifically explore gender, matching, minority groups, first-generation university students, nationality and power in the relationships. Finally, the programme was not compared to other mentoring programmes, locally, nationally or internationally.

1.9 GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

My study can be divided into four sections. Section 1 consists of two chapters (1–2) and provides the backdrop to the research which I conducted on two different levels. Chapter 1 provides an orientation to the study and Chapter 2 presents the theoretical frameworks.

Section 2 consists of three chapters (3–5) which outline the theoretical and literature perspectives. Chapter 3 deals with perspectives related to the concepts *mentoring* and *peer-mentoring* and Chapter 4 discusses *mentoring* and *peer-mentoring* in higher education. In conclusion, this section discusses psychosocial theories pertinent to my research and the development of a theoretical framework for peer-mentoring research which could be regarded as a contribution to mentoring research as discussed in Chapter 5.

Section 3 consists of only one chapter (6) in which the methods, logic and philosophy underpinning my study are discussed.

Section 4 consists of three chapters (7-9) which represent the empirical part of my study. The findings and analysis are presented in Chapter 7; the data analysis is presented in Chapter 8; and the key findings and implications for future research are discussed in Chapter 9.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL EXPLORATION

> "We must both be humble; for neither of us is meaningful except for the other. We come into life through relationship. We exist in a state of inter-animation."
>
> (Gergen 2009:34)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I report on the literature pertinent to and framing the research questions and lacunae identified in Chapter 1. The key conceptual foci identified were *social constructionism*, *relational theory*, *Ubuntu* and *mentoring*. I endeavoured to establish conceptual links between these concepts, to develop a coherent framework within which to embed the research, and to create a Polaroid lens through which to examine the data during the analysis and sense-making process. I thus invoked and explored these theoretical perspectives as a backdrop to the practical investigation into peer mentoring in higher education, and as a means of transition and development of the participants within the context of peer mentoring dyads.

As a point of departure, I explored the notions of *constructivism*, *constructionism*, *relational theory* and *Ubuntu*. My focus then shifted to pursuing the arguments in favour of putting the "social" back into constructionism, and to exploring the concepts of relational theory and Ubuntu to develop an understanding that co-informed and framed my research. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the key concepts or perspectives that were used to inform the theoretical framework for peer-mentoring (TF-PM) in higher education and which I applied in the sense-making process of the data. The discussion is also a response to the dearth of mentoring research conducted in relational contexts (Ragins & Kram 2007).

2.2 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM AND CONSTRUCTIONISM

A close reading of the research literature revealed that the concepts *constructivism* and *constructionism* are used interchangeably and arbitrarily (Botella & Herrero 2000; Patton 2002; Schultheiss 2005) and that often their distinctive features are shared or the two concepts are conflated (Schultheiss 2005).

Young and Collin (2004:375) point out how material that was labelled 'constructivist' in Brown and Brooks in 1996 was relexicalized as 'social constructionism' by Brown in 2002. They explain how Raskin comments on the varieties of constructivist psychologies, which creates the impression that the experts themselves are confused or at the very least inconsistent. According to Raskin (cited in Young & Collin 2004:375), the experts use "terms like 'constructivism', 'constructionism' and 'constructive' so idiosyncratically and inconsistently".

Patton (2002:97) raises the question whether or not a distinction made between constructivism and constructionism will gain any currency, given that these terms are so closely related. Botella and Herrero (2000:407) indicate that they will "further develop the dialogue between contemporary constructivist theories and social constructionist approaches". However, they do not proceed any further than noting that their understanding of relational constructivism has been greatly influenced by "contemporary constructivist theories and authors" as well as by philosophers who are often associated with constructionist positions. In order to address this conceptual inconsistency and conflation, these terms should be further explored.

2.2.1 Constructivism

Young and Collin (2004:375) state that constructivism "focuses on meaning making and the constructing of the social and psychological worlds through individual cognitive processes". Constructivism is therefore a particular psychological concept which posits an individuated understanding of psychological functioning. Crotty (1998:58) concurs and suggests that the concept of constructivism focuses primarily on "the meaning making activity of the individual mind".

There are at least two important elements to highlight in terms of constructivism, namely that the individual acts 'on' the environment and does so from an individuated perspective. In essence, this is a unidirectional action which in a sense renders the environment inactive. Martin and Sugarman (1999:9) argue that constructivism fails to make meaning of human social interaction on several levels because it relies on "an individually sovereign process of cognitive construction to make meaning of the world and (the individual concerned)". This view is supported by Young and Collin (2004:376) who hold that constructivism fails because it occupies a highly individualistic vantage point without

reference to social interaction, contexts and discourse that recognise and enable self-reflection, meaning-making, autobiography and therefore mentoring.

Crotty's (1998) stance, contrary to mine, is inconsistent with rendering meaning to the world as a relational and highly interpersonal phenomenon. In my research on peer mentoring as a critical constituent of student transition and adaptation to higher education, I part ways with Crotty (1998) and espouse a dyadic as opposed to an individuated relational approach.

2.2.2 Constructionism

Researchers such as Gergen and Gergen (1997); Hosking (1999), Devins and Gold (2002), Young and Collin (2004), and Van der Westhuizen (2008) argue that constructionism is not a single thing or theory of social construction. Young and Collin (2004), in particular, point out that constructionism has its origin in a range of disciplines and approaches, and that it covers a variety of views, from acknowledging how social factors shape interpretation to how the social world is constructed by social and relational practices. Hosking (1999) uses the metaphor of a "polyphony of constructionisms" to stress that the voices of many disciplines are heard when one engages with the concept.

Consequently, it was necessary to explore the meaning of the concepts of constructionism and social constructionism, drawing on the different characteristics that emerged from the literature pertinent to my study. I thus conclude this section by abstracting those attributes and characteristics that are salient to student peer mentoring as support for first-year university students who are in a transitional phase in higher education.

Intersubjectivity is crucial to constructionism in the context of mentoring; therefore, it is crucial to take cognisance of the social element in constructionism, which shifts the focus from notions of independence towards interdependence. Proponents of constructionism such as Young and Collin (2004), Neuman (2003), Patton (2002), and Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002) regard the adjective “social” as a crucial constituent of the term. The reason is that it is in the coming together of people or students that meaning is constructed in a relational context such as peer mentoring in my research.

This relational process of giving meaning to human social life is "intentionally created out of the purposeful actions of interacting social beings" (Neuman 2003:77). It is precisely

through this purposeful social interaction that reality is created and that participants influence each other. This implies that reality or the world does not exist independently of the individual, waiting to be discovered. It is existent in the potential, purposeful human interactional processes and therefore assumes a reality that is fluid and fragile (Neuman 2003). I argue that it is thus dynamic; not rigid, but alive to creation and re-creation and construction and re-construction for as long as people interact purposefully. It is context-bound, both socially and historically. Young and Collin (2004) argue in favour of this position by positing that reality in the constructionist sense is negotiated in a cultural and historical context. There is also a personal context that informs and is informed by the shared social realities created. This is the vantage point I took in this study.

It is in this defined context that the experiences and perceptions of the interacting subjects attribute meaning to reality (Neuman 2003), each other and their relationship. I thus advance the notion that they are not only interconnected by the process, but also by the common reality they have co-created. Schultheiss (2005:390) extends the meaning of the term of interconnectedness to include work and relationships. One could substitute 'work' for any of a number of other examples of shared experiences, such as peer mentoring in higher education, which was the subject of my research. It was the *process* and not the *product* of constructionism that was crucial to my study. At this point I proceeded to abstract the attributes of constructionism essential to my study, maintaining a special focus on the process.

Firstly, I briefly examined what some of the key proponents of constructionism deemed it to be. According to Gergen and Gergen (1997), there is not a single theory or finite set of practices in constructionism but a family of different approaches representing a number of characteristics. Table 2.1 presents the approaches propounded by Gergen and Gergen (1997), Botella and Herrero (2000), and Devins and Gold (2002) from which I abstracted those pertinent to my study.

Table 2.1: Approaches to constructionism

Gergen and Gergen (1997)	**Botella and Herrero (2000) Rational constructionism**	**Devins and Gold (2002)**
1. There are no transcendentally privileged accounts of what we take to	1. Being human entails construing meaning.	1. We experience our "world" and construct our reality through language.

exist.		
2. Whatever account we give of the world or the self finds its origins within relationships.	2. Meaning is an interpretive and linguistic achievement.	2. Meanings are made through a relational process between people.
3. Language functions as social action, constitutive of one or more traditions.	3. Language interpretation is relational achievements. Relationships are conversational and constitute subject positions which are based on voices.	3. By participating in different relationships and contexts, we open the possibility of new meanings and versions of reality to emerge.

Botella and Herrero (2000) aver that the essence of our being human is to construct meaning. All the proponents in Table 2.1 share the position that the construction of meaning occurs through language in relational contexts. As I concurred, I adopted the notions of relationships and the construction of meaning as a key to my study. I argued that these relationships must create purposeful interactive spaces within which meaning is negotiated by people, both of themselves, others and their "world" (Gergen & Gergen 1997; Devins & Gold 2002).

This intersubjective nature of the relationship renders it fluid and dynamic. These relationships are multiple and vary in social, cultural and historical context, which opens up the possibly “of new meanings and versions of reality” (Devins & Gold 2002). It becomes clear that the human account of itself and the world has its origins in the context of relationships. The nature of these generative relationships lies at the core of my research as students in transition to higher education have to create a new understanding of the world and themselves in order to adapt and survive. This transition, I argued, is embedded in the social interconnectedness of the peer mentoring dyad, which is the primary source of the authoring and re-authoring of the relational self by mentors and mentees. This capacity and space are important, especially as one negotiates one’s way through the maze of life. This raises the question as to how relationships, and in particular peer mentoring relationships in this case, contribute to the capacity and space of the first year-students to re-construct and augment their identities in the process of becoming tertiary students who are positive and successful. It asks how they rewrite themselves successfully into the university script or context. This question is revisited in Chapters 5 and 6 in particular, where peer mentoring is further explored.

Finally, constructionism in a relational context assumes a social characteristic and I thus chose social constructionism as one of the theoretical frameworks for my study. The reason being that it is congruent with my study as mentoring is essentially about the intentional co-construction of meaning, primarily in a social context, be it dyadic or group-related. Relational theory falls within the constructionist epistemology and is directed towards the intentional, interpersonal and meaning-seeking and -making nature of human kind. In the next section, relational cultural theory is discussed as an additional framework.

2.3 RELATIONAL CULTURAL THEORY (RCT)

Relational cultural theory (RCT) was developed as relational theory by Jean Baker Miller and other researchers at the Stone Centre at Wellesley College, United Sates of America. In the early 1970s, Miller found the then current traditional theories of counselling, mental health and human development to be "inadequate in capturing human experience" (Fletcher & Ragins 2007:377). She noted that these traditional theories were inconsistent and incongruent with her experiences with female clients whose lives were marked by the centrality of relationships (Comstock *et al.* 2008:279). Miller then developed a relational theory of development that was based on her experience that women grow and become in a context of relationships. Although this theory was inspired by feminist thinking, developed primarily to comprehend the psychological experiences of women, there is an increase in its application to improve our understanding of all human experience, including that of men (Jordan 2001; Jordan & Hartling 2002; Fletcher & Ragins 2007). Miller argues that this growth-in-connection model is critical to all human growth and development. She sets the primacy of relationships as the bedrock for all human development, a position which eschews traditional Western theories of development built on an ideology of individualism that extols independence and "what might be called the 'separate self' model of human development" (Jordan 2001:93).

This was a remarkable insight at the time and still is. It is an insight that can only be fully appreciated if one reflects on the notions of human development and pathways of growth followed by the traditionalists.

As early as 1989, Jordan observed that traditional theories of counselling and human development are primarily underpinned by the assumption that reality is made up of separate objects. This is typical of the ideology of Western individualism, which includes

“"hyper competitiveness and deterministic control"' (Comstock *et al.* 2008:279). It is an ideology that exalts the "growing away" from each other and a "movement toward autonomy, separation, and self-sufficiency" (Jordan 2001:92). Not only does this approach understand independence as a separation from the significant other but it operates in an emancipist fashion that seems to engender the setting free from intellectual, moral or emotional "fetters". Comstock *et al.* (2008:279) comment that "such an ideology is based on a set of myths". According to Jordan (1999:3), these myths include "mastery", "self-sufficiency" and, finally, the notion "that people assume their places in the existing societal hierarchy by virtue of merit" (Comstock *et al.* 2008:279). The developmental path advanced is thus one of separation and individuation that celebrates the 'separate self' approach to human development. It places separation, individuation and autonomy at the core of maturation and becoming and relegates relatedness to the periphery, a secondary state. In my study, however, I followed the Jordan position that places relationships at the centre. This theoretical position has implications for relational attributes. It was important to my study, which focused on dyadic peer mentoring relationships in the context of higher education.

Fletcher and Ragins (2007) highlight two distinguishing features of RCT *vis-à-vis* the traditional theoretical positions discussed earlier. Firstly, RCT re-presents relational values such as empathy and the ability to experience vulnerability as strengths and not as inadequacies. These attributes are thus reconceptualised as strengths instead of weaknesses as is the case with mainstream traditionalist thinking. In 2007 this was fairly radical oppositionist thinking that had profound implications for mentoring per se and mentoring as a pathway of transition to higher education. This issue is dealt with later in this chapter when these attributes are contextualised and discussed within relational interactions.

Secondly, "RCT is distinct from other theories (and) treats gender as a cultural rather than an individual-level phenomenon" (Fletcher & Ragins 2007:377). The authors argue that mainstream theories are gendered and focus on "masculine nature" as opposed to the issue of differences between men and women. Resultant from the approach espoused by traditional theories, relational attributes such as empathy and vulnerability are characterised as feminine traits, purportedly because of women's greater emotional needs. Men, however, "are socialized to devalue and deny in themselves the relational skills needed to survive psychologically, and rely on women to provide these attributes"

(Fletcher & Ragins 2007:378). These attributes and concomitant skills are devalued in men who mainly rely on women to provide these skills for their ultimate 'emancipation' from relational dependence to self-individuated independence and maturity. Fletcher and Ragins (2007:373) argue that this devaluing of human relational activity and centredness "allows society to perpetuate a myth of self-reliance and independence, even though most people have a network of others who support their 'individual' achievement". These values, notably self-reliance and independence, are proclaimed to be superior to relational values and ascribed to "masculinity". This sets up a power relationship of inequality. It is a relationship that assumes that the individuated self is "matured" into "self-power" and independence (from the relational context).

This development in RCT has implications for mentoring in general and peer mentoring in particular at the transitional point between high school and higher education. It similarly has implications for the nature of the mentoring relationships, the nature and perceptions of growth and development, and the understanding of "cross-gendered" mentoring dyads.

RCT further deepens this debate by introducing systemic categories of power and social identity. This is a logical development from the position that gender is a cultural construct. It also follows from the preferential position of the "separate self" as the ultimate state of being.

The Stone Centre consequently changed the name of its 'Relational Theory' to 'Relational Cultural Theory' to emphasise the importance that "relational interactions must always be understood within the broader social context in which they occur" (Fletcher & Ragins 2007:378).

This position is crucial to the definition given to mentoring and sense-making of the mentoring dyads in this study. This issue is addressed towards the end of this chapter as well as in Chapter 4.

The primacy of relationships in human understanding and becoming is the seminal point at which RCT, mentoring and social constructionism are ontologically connected. The crucial differences, however, are evoked and become manifest in the manner in which each of these conceptualises and engages with relationships. RCT puts forward a number of key tenets as part of its theoretical underpinnings. I shall now briefly discuss the following tenets that are of relevance to my study.

2.3.1 Key tenets of relational cultural theory (RCT)

RCT is a comprehensive theory of counselling and development theory that is grounded in the idea that relationships are at the very core of human development. It is important to explore the key tenets of this theory to gain a deeper understanding of how relationships are understood and constructed in this theoretical framework and how these relate to my study.

Fletcher and Ragins (2007) identify the following key tenets of RCT: interdependent self-in-relation, specific criteria that define growth in relationship and systemic power.

Interdependent self-in-relation

This tenet appears to be a contradiction in terms. The notion of the 'self' and that of 'inter-dependent' seem to be at variance with each other. However, this relational perspective of the self advances and includes the notion that the self can only make sense when embedded in a relationship (Ragins & Verbos 2007:92). This is a notion of the self as fluid, malleable, bi-directional and interactionist. It is a self that grows in a context of connectedness and it is "built on an understanding of people that emphasizes a primary movement toward and yearning for connection in people's lives" (Jordan 2001:95). Fletcher and Ragins (2007:380) point out that an infant, even in the earlier stages of life, exercises influence over the relationship between the self and the caregiver "and begins to develop an interacting sense of self". This process of relational development continues across one's life span (Comstock *et al.* 2008:279). Consequently, drawing on earlier theorists such as Chodoron and Surrey, the RCT theorists argue that the concept of self needs to be replaced with a concept that would reflect the human developmental process more accurately. The term they coined is 'self-in-relation' (Fletcher & Ragins 2007:380). This concept of 'self-in-relation', which is congruent with the natural human drive towards relationship that creates the core growth-fostering environment, will be further explored when 'mentoring' is conceptually examined. It must, however, be noted that although "the concept of self-in-relation holds that all individuals are selves-in-relation and that what varies is the extent to which they either accept and enact that reality—or deny it and operate as if they were discrete beings independent of others" (Fletcher & Ragins 2007:380)—it remains reasonable to hold that there is a variance in the degree to which people will accept and enact the relational self. This variance will also have an impact on

the nature and quality of the relationship and hence on mentoring relationships and, potentially, the ability to make the transition to higher education, as will be discussed later, particularly in the analysis and discussion sections of in Chapters 7 and 8.

Specific criteria define growth-fostering interactions

This tenet implies that not all interactions are necessarily growth-fostering. RCT draws a distinction between interactions that are growth-fostering and those which are not. Fletcher and Ragins (2007) point out that mutuality is a critical condition that a relationship has to comply with in order to be growth-fostering. The authors further contend that this mutuality can only occur under certain conditions, a set of relational skills, and provided that the outcomes of the relationship are mutually achieved.

Conditions for growth-fostering relationships

According to Fletcher and Ragins (2007:384), the participants need to demonstrate the following approach in order to create a growth-fostering relationship:

an expectation to grow and learn;

an expectation to be changed;

a responsibility and desire to contribute towards the growth and development of the other.

The first two conditions have to do with the self. They speak about the position the individual must take *vis-à-vis* the relationship and the other. Transition requires the willingness to change. The mentoring dyad is about creating this change for adaption to higher education in order to be successful. Change requires growth by both mentees and mentors; therefore the mentoring dyads need to constitute growth-fostering relationships.

An important relational skill for learning is listening (Fletcher & Ragins 2007). Not only does it require openness to the other, but it needs sensitivity and willingness to engage with the individual concerned, as well as enough regard for the other to lend legitimacy to the input given. This recognition of the other is critical as it contributes to the potential that the relationship has "to increase the generative capacity" of the individual "by providing new knowledge, resources, identities and forms of psychological growth" (Ragins & Verbos 2007:92).

Change therefore also takes place in terms of psychological growth and identity. Ragins and Verbos (2007:92) discuss change as involving personal growth, development and enrichment. Liang *et al.* (2002:274) point out that growth-fostering relationships among female college students increase their "sense of self-worth, vitality and validation, knowledge of self and others and a desire for further connection". Comstock *et al.* (2008:280) concur and conclude that "when people contribute to growth-fostering relationships, they grow as a result of their participation in such relationships". This echoes the importance of mutuality and interdependency raised earlier. I regard both these relationship qualities as crucial to peer mentoring for transition to higher education.

The third approach refers to the desire as well as the 'response-ability' to contribute towards the growth of the other. This requires a sense of connectedness and commitment to 'growth-in-connection' interactions (Fletcher & Ragins 2007). This position is also underpinned by the criterion of acknowledging one's interdependence and the importance of mutuality, which is pertinent to my study.

These conditions suggest that people are relational beings and that growth occurs in growth-fostering connections which are characterised by mutual outcomes. These outcomes are dependent on certain characteristics and relational skills.

Relational skills

The relational skills listed in Table 2.2 are noted in the literature as being critical to growth-fostering interactions.

Table 2.2: Relational skills and characteristics of growth-fostering relationships

	Skills/Characteristics	Authors in the field
1	Authenticity	Jordan (1989); Liang *et al.* (2002); Miller (2003); Fletcher and Ragins (2007)
2	Fluid expertise	Fletcher and Ragins (2007)
3	Empathic competence	Jordan (1989); Miller (2003); Fletcher and Ragins (2007); Ragins and Verbos (2007); Comstock *et al.* (2008)
4	Emotional competence	Fletcher and Ragins (2007)
5	Vulnerability	Fletcher and Ragins (2007)

6	Holistic thinking	Fletcher and Ragins (2007)
7	Response-ability	Fletcher and Ragins (2007)
8	Mutuality	Jordan (1989); Liang *et al.* (2002); Miller (2003); Fletcher and Ragins (2007); Ragins and Verbos (2007); Comstock *et al.* (2008)
9	Trust	Jordan (1989)
10	Empowerment	Liang *et al.* (2002); Miller (2003); Ragins and Verbos (2007)

(Developed from literature perspectives)

I held that peer mentoring creates growth fostering relationships and argued that transition becomes possible because of potential growth within the peer mentoring dyad. I also applied the relational skills in the selection of psycho-social theories which I used to inform the development of the TF-PM in higher education. Next I will discuss those characteristics and relational skills presented in Table 2.2 which were pertinent to my study.

Relational skills and characteristics of growth fostering relationships

I proposed the following skills and characteristics extracted from the literature perspectives as listed in Table 2.2 as pertinent to my understanding of peer mentoring in the context of my study.

Authenticity

Jordan (2001) and Fletcher and Ragins (2007) state that authenticity is a key condition for growth-fostering interactions to exist. Comstock *et al.* (2008:279) expand the scope of authenticity by positing that it "is necessary for real engagement in growth-fostering relationships". It is the authenticity of one's engagement in the relationship that transforms it into a growth-fostering one. For the engagement to be authentic and relationally effective, the individual must be able to represent him- or herself as completely as possible as determined by the degree of safety the relationship permits (Jordan 2001:95). The willingness of the other person to act in a mutually authentic manner greatly determines the degree of safety in the relationship (Jordan 2001). This will also enhance the quality and degree of growth that can potentially take place in the relationship. Fletcher and Ragins (2007:383) emphasise mutual authenticity as part of the process "whereby one can hold onto oneself but also experience the other's reality".

Liang *et al.* (2002) argue that it is important for mentoring relationships to create safe spaces for members of the dyads to grow, because people acquire both knowledge about the self and the other in these kinds of relationships. Jordan (1989) comments that, paradoxically, it is through getting to know the other that individuals get to know themselves. This challenges mentors to make dyads safe places where the dyadic partners can develop self-knowledge through the other.

Vulnerability

Two important contributions made by relational cultural theory, according to Fletcher and Ragins (2007:377), are the re-conceptualisations of relational attributes such as empathy and vulnerability as strengths "that should be developed in all as opposed to [being regarded as] deficiencies that are evidence of weakness or greater emotional need in some". As a relational strength common to all human relationships, vulnerability can be applied to improve the quality and growth-fostering capacity of the interaction and construed as an opportunity to grow as opposed to being a source of potential danger (Jordan 1989). It is important to remember that it can still prove to be very confusing and frightening for some people to enter into interpersonal relationships (Miller 2003).

Such fears might be informed by prior experiences of power differentials in relationships and other negative experiences in the relationship histories of those entering into 'connectedness' or relational interactions. A mindshift is needed to understand that vulnerability is a necessary condition for growth. Fletcher and Ragins (2007:383) also emphasise that it is important for this "self-in-relation stance" to be adopted by both parties and that they have to "approach the interaction expecting to grow from it and feel responsible for the growth of the other".

This mutual stance on vulnerability also challenges the stereotypical notions informing traditional role relationships and disallows power that is hierarchically based and exercised. Relationships that are growth-fostering are not about power *over* but power *with* as both parties acknowledge the needs and strengths which they place at the service of and in response to each other.

I concluded that unless both parties acknowledge and proceed on the basis of their own vulnerability, real growth, empowerment and becoming cannot occur. This was my

fundamental point of departure as it is important for and resonates strongly with peer mentoring.

Empathy

In her reflections on empathy as a critical component of RCT, Jordan (1989:4) draws on the German language as follows: "Translation of the original German word for empathy, *Einfühlung*, stresses the capacity to 'feel into' another's experience. Another possible way to think of this word is 'to feel at one with'.

RCT thus requires mutual engagement that generates empathy, a joining aspect that creates an increased sense of relatedness. This reaching out to, or 'feeling into', another's experience' has its origins in an empathic understanding of the self. One therefore needs to develop empathic resonance with the self as well as with the other. It is this 'empathic moment' or interhuman encounter that allows people to draw closer to each other, "expand their sense of human community" (Jordan 1989:5), and to become empathically attuned and more open to change (Miller *et al.* 1991). According to Jordan (1989:4), empathic understanding also enables people to understand each other's subjective worlds and move from a subject-object relationship to a subject-subject relationship.

Both mentors and mentees thus need to be open to experience themselves and each other empathically lest they lose the sense of empathic possibility (Jordan 1989). This affords them the opportunity to make a real contribution to growth and development, both to the self and the other, and to bridging the mentee into higher education.

Mutuality

Mutuality is a key concept in RCT and Jordan (1989:2) advances it as one of the "core relational goals" that manifest themselves as "an interplay of initiative and responsiveness".

Jordan (1989) contends that there needs to be mutual responsibility for the relationship to facilitate reciprocal growth and development. It is this responsiveness to others and the willingness to engage and take initiative that will influence them and lead to mutual growth. Miller (2003) argues that it is the openness and expectation to grow, as well as the willingness to contribute to the growth of the other, which creates growth-fostering relationships. According to Comstock *et al*. (2008:280), for the mature functioning of this

type of growth-fostering relationship, "movement toward mutuality rather than separation" is a critical characteristic (also see Fletcher & Ragins 2007).

It should be noted that *mutuality* is not *sameness* but rather a manner of relating to and sharing activities in which both (or all) parties involved are participating as fully as possible. This concept is therefore used in conjunction with other criteria, such as empathy, power, trust and authenticity. I considered mutuality as critical to my research as a determinant of growth, responsibility and reciprocal causality.

Trust

Liang *et al.* (2002:275) point out that mentoring is one of the most intense and intimate of all relationships. It is in response to this notion of intimacy and intensity that Comstock *et al.* (2008:283) posit trust to be a crucial constituent of growth-fostering relationships. They indicate that a lack of trust may interfere with the development of a more positive connection in individuals supporting each other. Jordan (1989) emphasises that, in a relationship, trust is the crux of safety and growth. However, no relationship is free from both internal and external stress. Ragins and Verbos (2007) emphasise that the relational partners must develop the competence to cope emotionally and develop the ability to respond to the challenges and demands of the relationship in their development of personal and relational resilience. It is important for the relationship itself to be tensile.

Power

Relationships are by their very nature asymmetrical. This also holds true for dyads. One person has more power than the other along various dimensions such as age, experience and position (Miller 2003:2). In response to how power is exercised differently in growth-in-connection relationships, Miller (2003:2) comments as follows:

> [L]et me say we have used the phrase 'power to' to mean the ability to make a change to any situation, large or small, i.e., the ability to move anything from point A to point B without the connotation of restricting or forcing anyone else. To the latter forms of power that imply force, we've used the term 'power over'.

In my research approach, I supported Miller's (2003) view that the power to do or to effect change by either of the parties should be applied only insofar as they would both benefit. Miller (2003) describes this mutual empowerment as a relationship where both partners

have moved towards more effectiveness in power, and not where one holds power over the other. Fletcher and Ragins (2007) concur, favour the egalitarian exercise of power, and renounce positionally based power practices. In the context of mentoring, the questions that need to be asked are how one makes sense of the unequal power differential and what makes it possible for the mentee to influence the more experienced mentor in the dyadic relationship.

To the first question, Fletcher and Ragins (2007:385) respond as follows:

> Although the overall level of expertise between mentor and protégé may be asymmetrical, growth in connection models allow for a state of fluidity in which expertise shifts within a given mentoring episode.

It is clear that a relational perspective offers the possibility of a more fluid and flexible relationship that makes turn-taking possible in the relational context—in my study, the peer mentoring dyad.

In response to the second question, Miller (2003) argues that these unequal relationships are not synonymous with inequalities forced upon people (social groups such as mentees or first-year students). The goal in these relationships, the argument continues, is to foster growth of the other person, which means to progress towards equality and change.

Although it seems that the onus weighs more heavily on the more powerful person to move towards fuller mutuality—and eventually equality—the knowledge and skills brought into the relationship by the less experienced person must be recognized and given the space and legitimacy to have an impact on the other in a mutual movement towards each other in order to bring about an authentic growth-fostering relationship. The challenge this presents to peer mentoring is power-sharing that results in inter-mentoring. In this manner, the two members of the dyad can co-create a new shared dyadic reality that is greater than what the individuals can create or bring into the relationship. This is an experience that recants the traditional 'power over' culture.

It is exactly this type of relational experience and self-in-connected actualization that is the bedrock of a growth-fostering relationship. This is a relationship that is generative and can potentially create a bridge for first-year students into higher education.

There are powerful systemic 'disabling' control mechanisms that present further challenges to those affected to overcome. The challenges presented by negative systemic factors and relational histories can paradoxically be overcome through growth-fostering relationships. It is crucial that, at the point of transition to higher education, growth-fostering relationships become available to facilitate the transition to higher education and enable students to self-actualise. This is a critical challenge for peer mentoring as a practice to help first-year students make the transition into higher education. In my research, I explored peer mentoring as a stabilising process that assists first-year students in coping with some of the 'disabling' systemic mechanisms and challenges at university.

Outcomes of growth-fostering relationships

RCT sets out five evaluative criteria to determine if a relationship is growth fostering (Fletcher & Ragins 2007:386; Comstock *et al.* 2008:282).The 'five good things' are presented in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: The 'five good things' as outcomes of growth-fostering interactions

Criteria ('good things')	Definition
Zest	Connection with the other that gives both members a sense of increased energy and vitality
Empowered action	Motivation and ability to put into practice some of what was learned or experienced in the relational interaction
Increased sense of worth (self-in-relation esteem)	Increased feelings of worth that come from the experience of having used one's 'self-in-relation' to achieve mutual growth in the connection with the other person
New knowledge	Learning that comes from the ability to engage in 'fluid expertise', fully contributing one's own thoughts and perspective while at the same time being open to others
Desire for more connection	A desire to continue this particular connection and/or establish other growth-fostering connections, leading to a spiral of growth that extends outwards, beyond the initial participants

(Developed from Fletcher & Ragins 2007:386)

These outcomes are critical to dyads in order to determine if they are growth-fostering. In my research, these criteria were considered in the development of the theoretical framework for peer mentoring (TF-PM in higher education). It is important to note that

Fletcher and Ragins (2007) neither prioritise these outcomes in terms of importance nor do they state to what degree these must have been achieved to constitute a growth-fostering relationship. The question whether all these outcomes must be reached 'equally' by both partners is also not raised. Fletcher and Ragins (2007) also do not comment directly on the status of the relationship if one or more of these outcomes are not reached by either or both of the partners. It is, however, important that the dyadic partners pursue these outcomes in order to create a generative relationship.

It is important at this stage to be cognizant of these outcomes against the backdrop of the criteria discussed. Collectively these outcomes are characteristic of growth-fostering relationships.

2.4 PHILOSOPHY OF UBUNTU

My study was conducted in a South African context at a historically previously disadvantaged institution of higher learning. Especially after 1994 there has been a marked increase in previously excluded students at institutions of higher learning. These institutions have become more multicultural. The students entering higher education, especially at the site of this study, have broadened the worldviews of other students at these institutions. In South Africa in general, the philosophy of Ubuntu has become more inclusive and more prevalent among students. The understanding of the concept of Ubuntu has become more common among students as a potential understanding of who they are. According to Menkiti (1984), the philosophy of Ubuntu is underpinned by a strong relational understanding of people. Mbiti (1970:141) summarises Ubuntu as follows, indicating the relational core: "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am." This correlates very strongly with relational theory which emphasises the interdependence of people and eschews individuation. Menkiti (1984) points out that the individual only ‘becomes’ in his or her rootedness in the community. This other-directedness contributes towards a more sensitive awareness of the participants’ perspectives and holds the potential for multiple insights, especially from the standpoint of the researcher (Swanson 2007). There is a move away from the I-you dichotomy in traditional (Swanson 2007) and non-relational research towards a strong focus on human relationships, taking into account the notion of spiritual consciousness. In the context of my research, the dyad constitutes that communal space in which this growth occurs and through which transition to the broader university community is facilitated. In examining the nature of Ubuntu, Prinsloo

(2000) notes the following characteristics, which are supported not only by social constructionism or relational theory, but also by the perspectives on mentoring drawn from the literature: man or woman is a social being; there is a sense of extended family or universal brother- or sisterhood; the value of sharing and other-directedness is generally acknowledged. Geber and Keane (2013) add the attributes of humility and helpfulness, spiritual guidance and the primacy of relationships as principles of Ubuntu. Finally, the interpersonal nature of Ubuntu and its potential for developing human capital are deemed to include characteristics such as empathy, understanding, interaction, participation, cooperation, reciprocation and a deep sense of social responsibility (Prinsloo 2000). In my research, I drew on the philosophy of Ubuntu to inform my theoretical framework (TF-PM) which I applied as a crucible for making sense of the data.

2.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I reflected on three theoretical frameworks for my study. Some of the key concepts and ideas that emerged were empathy, vulnerability, power, trust, mutuality and conditions such as the expectation to grow, to be changed and to contribute to the growth of the other. These concepts and conditions were applied to the theoretical framework for peer mentoring (TF-PM) that is discussed in Chapter 6 and also used to analyse the data in Chapters 7 and 8. In the following chapter I explore perspectives on mentoring that will further inform the TF-PM in higher education.

CHAPTER 3

ORIENTATION TO THE CONCEPT OF MENTORING

"… it is difficult to separate identity, or the self-system that explains ourselves to the world and to ourselves, from the social relationships in which it is embedded. These relationships provide the context for self-definition as well as a direct feedback about our strengths, weaknesses and similarities, and differences."

(Dutton & Ragins 2007:29)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the concepts of *mentoring*, *developments in mentoring* and *peer mentoring* underpinning my research and from which I selected the essential elements pertinent to the study. Given the dearth of theoretically informed research on the concept of mentoring (Holt & Berwise 2010), despite its increasing popularity as a support mechanism in higher education, I first examined the concept from the point of view of those studies that adopt a theoretical approach. The relevant studies include a phenomenological reading of the literature on mentoring by Roberts (2000), followed by two grounded theory approaches to analysing mentoring by Pitney and Ehlers (2004) and Chan (2008). Next, I scrutinized the research materials that follow a conceptual analysis approach. These are the studies by Stewart and Krueger (1996), who present an evolutionary concept analysis of mentoring, and Bozeman and Feeney (2007), who conducted a conceptual analysis in the form of a thought experiment to critique mentoring theory. The chapter further presents a review of later developments in mentoring, with a special focus on peer mentoring as a key concept in the research (Jacobi 1991; Powell 1997; Hall 2003; Ehrich, Hansford & Tennent 2004; and Crisp & Cruz 2009) and concludes with a definitional framework for peer mentoring as applied to my research.

As discussed in Chapter 4, a number of articles grounded in higher education and uninformed by any theory or framework were nevertheless selected and analysed as they were thought to contribute useful perspectives on designing a theoretical framework for peer mentoring (TF-PM) in higher education (Flick 2011:32), such as the one presented in Chapter 5.

The concept of mentoring is complex, broad and complicated and has been applied to many fields of study (Eby, Rhodes & Allen 2007; Ragins & Kram 2007). It has also been applied a-contextually and inconsistently "… to describe a wide variety of interpersonal relationships" (Mertz 2004:541), as well as a-theoretically (Crisp & Cruz 2009). This view echoes that of Jacobi (1991) who conducted an extensive literature review on the topic. The term is further complicated by the contradictory roles often associated with it (Mertz 2004:542), the lack of theory to explain it (Bozeman & Feeney 2007; Crisp & Cruz 2009), and the fact that it operates in various evaluated and unevaluated contexts (Ehrich *et al*. 2004). The authors (520) further point out that, often vague and imprecise techniques are employed, even where mentoring programmes are evaluated.

This "definitional and conceptual confusion" surrounding the concept of mentoring (Budge 2006; Haggard *et al.* 2011) was also pointed out by Eby *et al.* (2007). In fact, Bozeman and Feeney (2007), who share this concern, remark that it is easier to locate findings about mentoring than to get an explanation of mentoring. Colley (2003) and Chan (2008) state that there is no clarity or agreement on the meaning of the concept, and that little is known about dyadic mentoring relationships. Colley (2003) raises the concern that there is no sound theoretical base that underpins mentoring practice or policy research.

This situation is endemic in the context of higher education. Crisp and Cruz (2009:527), in a critical review of the literature on mentoring college students written between 1990 and 2007, repeatedly found a lack of a consistent definition of mentoring within the context of higher education and the use of definitions that were broad or vague. They (Crisp & Cruz 2009) point out that educational researchers have not come forward with explicit operational definitions. In the case of qualitative studies, this vagueness has at times understandably been described by researchers as an opportunity for the functions or characteristics of mentoring to be revealed by participants, allowing the definition to reflect or represent their own academic experience (Crisp & Cruz 2009:528).

Next I will consider the corpus of theoretically based studies on mentoring.

3.2 THEORETICAL APPROACHES

3.2.1 Phenomenological approach

In an attempt to describe how the mentoring phenomenon is perceived and experienced by others, Roberts (2000) adopted a phenomenological approach. He describes an approach that:

> … suggests that if we can lay aside, as best we can, the prevailing understandings of phenomenon and revisit our experience of them, possibilities for new understandings emerge for us, or we may witness at least an authentication and enhancement of former meaning (147).

Roberts (2000) makes a number of important assertions here. He argues for a stance where one needs to bracket one's own understandings in order to take a fresh look at the phenomenon of mentoring, which is the position attempted throughout this study. He also points out that, by adopting this stance, one could authenticate or enhance existing understandings of the phenomenon. The aim of his review is to achieve a phenomenological reduction in revisiting the mentoring phenomenon with the emphasis upon uncovering its essential attributes (147). Roberts argues that one can only arrive at a lexical definition "after locating a consensus on the essential attributes of the mentoring phenomenon as perceived by those who observe, practice, research and evaluate the phenomenon" (249)".

Roberts (2000) concludes that, to understand the concept of mentoring, one needs to have experience and be able to identify the essence of mentoring. Finally, Roberts makes the critical point that these essences or attributes are not fixed or permanent. They are dependent upon those who view them and the context and time within which they are explored. This is a critical issue in all research, including my own. The essential inductively discovered attributes by Roberts are summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Essential attributes of mentoring according to Roberts (2000)

	Essential attribute	Understanding from the literature explored
1.	A process form	It is ongoing (not an event), exists over time, is dynamic and changes; a two-way process of mutual affinity; intentional, structured, nurturing, insightful, complex and growth generating

2.	An active relationship	Mutual affinity, transmitting knowledge, clear identification; a process; rate of progress determined by mentor or mentee
3.	A helping process	Mentor helps mentee; gives guidance and protection
4.	A teaching and learning process	Transmission of knowledge
5.	A reflective practice	Mentor should encourage mentee to stop, reflect and evaluate
6.	A career and personal development opportunity	Career mobility, opportunity and recognition
7.	A formalized process	'Policy interventions' can be hazardous; create possible conflict between organisational and mentee interest; can be used to perpetuate organisational culture; utilized for induction
8.	A role constructed for or by the mentor	Mentoring roles include: teacher, counsellor, supporter, guide, sponsor responding to or conforming to the needs of the other

(Adapted from Roberts 2000)

Roberts (2000) regards these attributes, as abstracted from the literature, as essential. My preliminary response was that the attributes dealing with career and personal development were viewed slightly differently in the context of the current study. The issue of 'career' should be understood as the career of the student as knowledge gatherer and ‘co-creator' in the context of higher education, the business of which is to train, develop and generate knowledgeable workers and a high-level of skilled people. The other attributes are discussed at the end of this section.

Roberts (2000) also identifies role modelling, sponsoring and coaching as contingent attributes. I reflect on some of these attributes in Chapter 5 which deals with psychosocial theories. Roberts lists the consequences of mentoring and concludes that there seems to be agreement in the literature that mentoring could result in positive growth, development and self-actualisation, self-satisfaction and altruism. He neither refers to nor mentions the potential negative effects of mentoring.

Roberts (2000:162) agrees that mentoring is a complex, social and psychological activity and that there is a lack of a common understanding of what mentoring is. He concludes with the following definition of the concept of mentoring after exploring its essential and contingent attributes:

> A formalized process whereby a more knowledgeable and experienced person actuates a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning within a less experienced and knowledgeable person, so as to facilitate that person's career and personal development (162).

Roberts (2000) believes that this definition, as the product of an inductive, phenomenological approach, might be useful to others and facilitate further research and debate. I have considered this definition in the development of a practical framework for peer mentoring in higher education as set out in Chapter 5.

3.2.2 A grounded theory approach

Both Pitney and Ehlers (2004) and Chan (2008) used a grounded theoretical approach in their exploration of mentoring as a phenomenon. They concur that there is no consensus definition for mentoring and that mentoring is utilized to enhance the individual in the context of a relationship. Pitney and Ehlers (2004:344) posit that, regardless of whether mentoring occurs formally or informally, the aim is to enhance an individual's professional development by way of a relationship with a more experienced person.

Although both Pitney and Ehlers (2004) and Chan (2008) used a grounded theory approach, the two studies involved very different types of students, namely undergraduates and pre-doctoral students. Both Pitney and Ehlers (2004) and Chan (2008) needed access to a specific stratum of academia. Chan (2008:274), via a grounded theory approach, developed a concept, 'the inside story', as an extended metaphor to assist students in coming to grips with the many complex university processes, ranging from admission procedures to understanding how to interact with academic staff. This resonates with Pitney and Ehlers's finding (2004:344) that undergraduate students have to deal with a very complex academic context and are consequently faced with academic and social challenges in the process of effecting the transition to higher education. Chan (2008:263) argues that mentoring is used as a strategy for teaching students to cope with these challenges and to gain access to the 'inside story' of higher education.

Pitney and Ehlers (2004) set out to gain insight into the mentoring process, and they developed a triarchic model to make sense of mentoring as a strategy to assist undergraduates in gaining access to academia. Chan (2008), in turn, examined mentoring practices with pre-doctoral students similarly seeking access to academia. To this purpose she (2008) devised a number of mentoring practices, some of which had been anticipated

while others she labelled as 'unanticipated' and 'surprising'. Both studies describe mentoring as a socialisation process for transition. Chan (2008) explicitly utilised two propositions, namely individual and random socialisation which she attributes to Van Maanen and Schein (1979).

The Pitney and Ehlers (2004) study culminated in the following model (Figure 3.1), which depicts their findings succinctly:

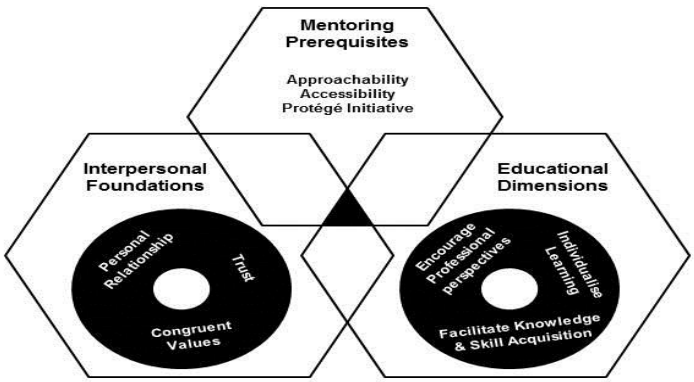

Figure 3.1: A conceptual model of the mentoring process

(Pitney & Ehlers 2004:348)

Pitney and Ehlers's (2004) argument, as is evident from Figure 3.1, is that 'authentic' mentoring occurs when the mentoring prerequisites are met and the interpersonal foundations and educational dimensions coalesce. The authors do, however, concede that, although the model represents a perfect alignment, in practice a mentoring relationship could emphasize the dimensions in differing proportions (348). The prerequisites, foundations and dimensions are determined by the dyadic members, context and stage of the relationship. This points to the uniqueness of mentoring dyads, which was also true of the dyads used my in study. The two dimensions that I considered relevant to my study were the mentoring prerequisites and the interpersonal foundations. Elements from these dimensions feature strongly in my study, as will be seen in Chapters 7 and 8, in particular, where the analysis and discussion of the data are presented.

Next I briefly discuss some points of contact between Chan (2008) and Pitney and Ehlers (2004) before I conclude my discussion of Chan (2008). In their article, Pitney and Ehlers (2004:348) state that the findings from their empirical observations indicate that students expect mentors to be accessible and approachable, but that students need to take the initiative in order for the mentoring relationship to develop. Chan (2008:271) found that mentors were willing to share time with their protégés, even to the point of 'being willing to share their personal phone numbers and emails; and they also answered their questions promptly. In both cases, being available and approachable is important to the development of the dyadic mentoring relationship. Chan (2008) also concurs that mentees need to take initiative and responsibility for the relationship. This shared responsibility is a critical element of reciprocity that can only grow if the development and life of the relationship is co-owned and managed.

Assuming co-ownership of the relationship introduces the notion of agency of the mentee. This is the power within that enables the mentee to take initiative to help shape the relationship. An important discovery made by Chan (2008:272) was the pro-activity of the mentees, which she categorises as an "unanticipated finding" insofar as they were taking the initiative on behalf of the mentor in her study. In my study, the mentees took this type of initiative and acted as significant others for the mentors at times. This was unanticipated in the sense of Chan's "discovery". Being proactive is a "futuristic" response, responding to situations one foresees, anticipates or which are emergent. This creates a dimension of mentoring as a strategy to bridge students into undergraduate or pre-doctoral programmes. Both Chan (2008) and Pitney and Ehlers (2004) present an element of 'the future' for the prospective students, and thus it seems important for mentors to be able to act proactively. As Chan (2008:272) points out, it is important for mentors to take care of mentees who display limited knowledge and an inability to ask the right questions about higher education. Pitney and Ehlers (2004:349) emphasize that mentees need to engage with mentors in a personal relationship for both to learn about the profession and to promote their own professional socialisation. The transition from high school to university also requires becoming part of this socialisation process.

Chan (2008:269) found that sharing personal stories was important in establishing rapport and closeness between mentors and mentees. This imbued the mentees with the belief that it was possible for them to be successful in academia. Chan (2008) concludes that role

modelling was essential for the ethnic minority students in her study. Pitney and Ehlers (2004:249) similarly concur that role modelling is valuable and argue that it is not a passive process as is commonly held. In the mentoring context, role modelling requires that students become actively involved as they engage in a personal relationship with a more experienced person. I propose that, unlike role models such as film or sports stars, the mentor as a role model is immediate, active and real. This adds a new dynamic to role modelling which in conventional theory does not require this sense of immediacy for personal engagement. It is also because of the very intimate nature of this relationship and because "theoretically a mentoring relationship could emphasise more or less of any given dimension" (Pitney & Ehlers 2004:348), that each relationship assumes a uniqueness of its own and responds to role modelling accordingly.

The issue of trust features in both studies. Pitney and Ehlers (2004:347) hold that trust is a key element of interpersonal foundations of relationships such as mentoring. Chan (2008:269) echoes this in pointing out the relationship between trustworthiness and mentor responsiveness. Mentors are not only to be trusted with (mentees), but also trusted to (do what is required). This extends one's understanding and expectations related to trust.

Table 3.2 depicts Chan's (2008) anticipated and unanticipated findings and gives an overview of her findings. It consists of two columns. The first column shows the anticipated findings and the second her unanticipated findings. Table 3.1 is also helpful as it assists one in seeing the differences and commonalities between her findings and those of Pitney and Ehlers (2004).

Table 3.2: Chan's (2008) anticipated and unanticipated findings

Anticipated findings	Unanticipated findings
Providing information (mentors) Coaching (mentors) Exposure and visibility: making connections Sharing personal stories and humour Responsiveness Validation Avoiding feedback Reciprocal relationship	Talking about race and racism Giving time (mentors) Being proactive (mentors) Flexibility and working on goals (mentors) Giving gifts and resources

(Adapted from Chan 2008)

Chan (2008) introduces two novel findings from her unanticipated findings. Firstly, she notes that the dyads engaged on race and racism and, secondly, she introduces the notion of giving gifts. The literature on mentoring generally does not refer to the topics spoken about in the dyads when mentoring practices and activities are explored. This finding is significant because it raises a serious discussion about societal challenges (Chan (270). This foregrounds mentoring as a transition strategy both in the interracial cultural context and the organisational (higher education) cultural context. It poses yet another challenge to mentoring and mentoring programmes in particular, given that institutions of higher learning are becoming more multicultural and complex as sites of learning. Also, within the context of the dyad, the members have to develop an in-depth understanding of race and culture (2008) to overcome the challenges of transition into higher education. This finding could also prompt further research to explore issues discussed in dyads as indications of skills and activities required from mentors and mentees as opposed to only looking at behaviour and activities or practices. It is about looking beyond the obvious to discover the deeper challenges to openness and transparency.

Chan's (2008) finding on giving gifts at first appears to be strange. It seems like 'bribing' that could adversely affect the authenticity of the relationship. It is only when she states that these "generous gestures were important in signifying the mentors' emotional investment and commitment to their protégés" (273), that the freshness of her interpretation breaks through. It is again finding the significant in the obvious, obscured by previous understandings or biases about the practice. This is a challenge that I dealt with in my study.

An issue raised by Pitney and Ehlers (2004:347), not present in the Chan (2008) study, is that the greater the congruency of the values of the potential mentor and protégé, the better the chance of success of the interpersonal relationship. Pitney and Ehlers (2004) come to the conclusion that congruent values facilitate the development of trust. It also seems logical that value congruency would advance and support goal flexibility and attainment.

Finally, Pitney and Ehlers (2004) found that friendship was one of the factors that helped the mentoring relationship to develop and to be sustained over time. This development seems to move away from the mentor-protégé language to a more egalitarian relationship of being 'friends'. This is not the interpretation provided by Pitney and Ehlers (2004) but, given the openness that friendship creates, moving between professional and personal

experiences and greater sharing seems to suggest an evening out, or at least a shift in the relationship. This alludes to the long-term development of mentoring as an egalitarian interpersonal relationship that is reciprocal in nature.

Neither Pitney and Ehlers (2004) nor Chan (2008) offers a definition for mentoring; however, both contributed to my understanding of the mentoring perceptions and experiences of undergraduates and assisted in my meaning-making process with my data.

In conclusion: both of these studies, underpinned by grounded theory, contributed towards the development of an understanding of mentoring relevant to my study. The Pitney and Ehlers (2004) model shows the complex interlacing of interpersonal and educational dimensions. These authors also mention the negative experiences and effects of mentoring that are normally expunged from the general literature on mentoring that tends to provide a litany of benefits in what appears to be an expurgated view. The Chan (2008) contribution is her explication of "mentoring as a form of access to the inside story" (276). Her discussion is couched in the language of guidance, support, commitment and sharing. All these practices are necessary to assist mentees to gain access to and function in the "inside world" of higher education which is "foreboding and often impenetrable" (Chan 2008:276). In my study, the dyad gives the mentee access to the inside story and helps the mentee to adapt and make the transition successfully.

3.3 CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS APPROACHES

The conceptual analysis approach to mentoring is represented by two articles 11 years apart and still confronted by the same challenge, namely to find a theory for mentoring. In the context of this discussion 'theory' means a consensus conceptual understanding. Thus, I use the term 'theory' in this discussion to mean practice seeking understanding. Both the relevant articles are literature-based, theoretical and not empirical and were selected purposively to represent the theoretical endeavour to advance our understanding of the concept of mentoring and to inform the TF-PM in higher education which I developed in the course of my study (see Chapter 5) and applied in the analysis of my empirical data in Chapters 7 and 8.

Both Stewart and Krueger (1996) and Bozeman and Feeney (2007) used a conceptual analysis approach to engage with the concept of mentoring. Two different methods of conceptual analysis were used. Stewart and Krueger (1996:312) used an approach which

they called an ‘evolutionary concept analysis’ to clarify the meaning of mentoring in nursing (in higher education) in an attempt to develop a theoretical definition for mentoring.

Bozeman and Feeney (2007:720), on the other hand, referred to their approach as a thought experiment of an acknowledged relationship. They then generated seven fundamental questions about mentoring and demonstrated how difficult it was to find answers using the existing literature up to 2007 (both empirical and theoretical). This they followed up with a reformulation of the concept of mentoring. Bozeman and Feeney (2007) employed standard criteria in developing their definition of mentoring. The definition they developed served to resolve the fundamental questions on mentoring set out at the beginning of the process. They concluded by answering these questions and pointed out the implications for future discernments and research on the topic of mentoring.

3.3.1 Evolutionary concept analysis

The evolutionary analysis of the concept of mentoring by Stewart and Krueger (1996) resembled my own research insofar as it was also located in higher education. I therefore considered it appropriate as a source to be drawn upon to inform my study and raise relevant and critical questions via the attributes they identified.

The first defining attribute of mentoring, according to Stewart and Krueger (1996), is that it is a teaching and learning relationship that facilitates the transmission of knowledge between mentors and their protégés. This resonates strongly with Roberts's (2000) earlier statement that the transmission of knowledge is a component of an active mentoring relationship. Knowledge in this context, according to Stewart & Krueger (1996:313) is not only academic but encompasses the mentor's knowledge of life in general and academic experiences. Chan (2008) refers to this kind of knowledge as the inside story of academia to which the mentor gives the mentee access, as discussed earlier. However, the issue of knowledge transfer is not as uncomplicated as it might seem at face value. Stewart and Krueger (1996) raise the question as to which mentoring activities facilitate this knowledge transfer, and Bozeman and Feeney (2007) ask which part of knowledge transmission is mentoring and which is not. My view, as articulated in this research study, is that both academic and non-academic forms of knowledge transfer are crucial to peer-mentoring relationships as a means of facilitating the transition to higher education.

The concept of reciprocity features very strongly in Stewart and Krueger's (1996) conceptual analysis. They claim that the potential for reciprocation, and the degree to which mentors and protégés can reciprocate in the relationship, are determined by factors such as time, willingness and other-directedness. The authors argue that reciprocity seems to increase over time as the protégé gradually moves to achieving independence away from the mentor. As the roles in the relationship evolve, a balanced reciprocal process of give-and-take emerges between the mentor and the protégé (314). In addition, the development of joint values and goals is facilitated by a willingness to change perception. In this way the mentoring partners can redefine themselves through the mentoring relationship, which is an indication of reciprocity in the relationship. The issue of "joint goals" is referred to as "value congruency" by Pitney and Ehlers (2004). I would also like to comment here on the Stewart and Krueger (1996) position that the members of the mentoring relationship redefine themselves as their relationship develops. This is an issue that lies at the heart of my study. I explored the manner in which mentees and mentors redefined themselves personally and interpersonally as initiates (undergraduates) of the 'inside story' of academia.

In the previous chapter, I re-interpreted the notion of career development as that of "career of student-knowledge gatherer and co-creator in the context of higher education". I concur with Stewart and Krueger (1996) that mentoring contributes to academic and professional success. Another point raised by the authors (314) suggests that efforts in mentoring are directed away from personal success to professional success as a change in focus from the outcomes of the mentoring relationship to the content of the relationship (the mutually generated and shared knowledge) comes about. This remains a novel issue if one transposes it on the first-year level. There does not seem to be an understanding of students assuming and being prepared for a 'career of student-knowledge gatherer and co-creator' on the undergraduate level as they make the transition to higher education. It appears that there is a much stronger focus on student success in a mechanistic sense than on student growth and development. This raised a challenge for my study; therefore, a knowledge and competence differential in the peer-mentoring dyad and the willingness of mentees to mentor in the future are perennial issues that I address in the final section of this chapter.

3.3.2 Thought experiment as conceptual analysis

In their thought experiment as a conceptual analysis process, Bozeman and Feeney (2007) developed seven critical questions, five of which are relevant to my study: Is there acknowledgement? Who is the mentor? Must the mentor and mentee like each other? Is there knowledge transmission and mentoring? When does the relationship end?

The first three questions intersect with the interpersonal foundations of the Pitney and Ehlers (2004) model. Bozeman and Feeney (2007:727–28) discuss these questions primarily from the perspective of research design and how, "if mentoring is viewed as a phenomenon not requiring awareness or acknowledgement by the persons involved, very different research techniques might be required, such as participant observation or unobtrusive measures". The position I took in this study, however, was from the relational perspective of the concept of mentoring, which required awareness and acknowledgement by the dyadic members. The five questions which I abstracted from Bozeman and Feeney (2007) remain relevant to my study. My study, located in a formal mentoring programme, utilized formally assigned mentors and mentees who set up specific personal relationships sharing the foundations in the Pitney and Ehlers (2004) model.

The second question ('Who is the mentor?') focuses on the nature of the mentoring relationship and its capacity both to accommodate and encourage multidimensionality in the relationship. This creates the possibility and opportunity for one member of a dyad to perform the role of mentor in one or more situation and (for the same dyad) the mentee in other situations (Bozeman & Feeney 2007). In my study, I linked this to reciprocity and power-sharing. The category of interpersonal foundations is one of the three components of the model presented by Pitney and Ehlers (2004). This component has the following elements: trust, congruent values and personal relationships. In their discussion of this component, the authors argue that it is a prerequisite for mentees to take initiative in order for the mentoring relationship to develop. This places some of the responsibility on mentees to contribute to the development of the relationship. I support the view that mentees need to take initiative and I advance trust as a criterion for mentee interaction to take place. Trust is a critical aspect of interdependence in the mentoring relationship.

In a question pertaining to friendship, Bozeman and Feeney (2007:728) ask whether individuals can be engaged in successful mentoring and career development without liking

one another. This raises the issue of the relationship between friendship and mentoring and the position of friendship in a mentoring relationship. I regard friendship as a psychosocial function closely related to mentoring and explored it as it came to the fore in my data.

The tension between typical training and mentoring in terms of knowledge transmission as broached by Bozeman and Feeney (2007) was not a key issue for my study. However, one may ask what type of knowledge transfer is needed in an undergraduate mentoring relationship. The question as to when peer socialisation and friendship, where there is a spontaneous and natural imparting of knowledge, transmutes into a mentoring relationship, is a complicated one. I view the question of how the mentor perceives his or her role in the dyad as critical, given the relational stance I took in my research. What happens first? Is it a question of the establishment of friendship as access to mentoring, or mentoring to build friendship and trust? Friendship remains important as one cannot "despise a person and work effectively with that person as a protégé" (Bozeman & Feeney 2007:733). This view is important in the context of peer mentoring, especially at the level of first-year students who are making the transition to higher education.

The previous question asks when mentoring begins and ends. In my view, there could be an administrative approach as well as a process approach. In the administrative approach, the mentoring relationship starts when the mentors and mentees are assigned to each other. In explaining the process approach, one might draw on Bozeman and Feeney's (2007:733) view that mentoring does not begin until the knowledge of interest has begun to be both transmitted and received and the two parties recognize their roles in the relationship. Bozeman and Feeney (2007) also introduce the notion that the equalisation of the power differential in the relationship is an indication of the end of the mentoring relationship. I take a different position, namely that the equalisation of the power differential much rather signifies a deepening of the relationship. The authors argue that mentoring ends when there is limited contact and a limited transmission of knowledge (733), and that the mentoring relationship base is informal. This is to distinguish it from training, which they rightfully hold to be authority-based and formal. My research was located in an educational environment and the mentoring relationships were embedded in a formal programme. In such a scenario, the mentoring relationship becomes a dimension of the undergraduate's new formal relationship as a new first-year student with the institution. I thus posit that mentoring relationships could have either an informal or formal base.

In the context of my study, the formal relationship technically ended with the closure of the programme at the end of the academic year. The mentoring relationship itself, admittedly, might transcend the lifespan of the peer mentoring programme, and there is also the possibility of mentees becoming mentors to the new cohort of first-year students.

By adopting conceptual analysis techniques in exploring mentoring and mentoring theory, both of the above-mentioned studies by Pitney & Ehlers (2004) and Bozeman & Feeney 2007) advance the process in my study towards the development of a theoretical framework for peer mentoring (TF-PM) in higher education (see Chapter 5).

In the following section, I reflect on literature reviews on mentoring as a way towards further engagement with the concept.

3.4 EXPLORATORY APPROACHES IN THE LITERATURE

This section of the literature perspectives focuses on six explorations of the concept of mentoring in the literature generated between 1991 and 2009. These explorations depict the heterogeneous nature of mentoring across disciplines such as education, business, medicine and psychology (Jacobi 1991; Hawkey 1997; Powell 1997; Hall 2003; Ehrich *et al.* 2004; Crisp & Cruz 2009). Such variance attests to the diversity and vitality of the practice and research of mentoring. The researchers and practitioners from these different disciplines contribute towards and increase our understanding of the concept of mentoring. This also raises questions about the degree of integration across different disciplines and the extent to which a composite and cumulative corpus of knowledge might be developing. It highlights questions about points of convergence, consistency of findings across disciplines, and recurrent themes and experiences. It also raises the caveat that, if one does not address or at the very least take cognizance of this integration, one could regress into a practice of generating disjointed views of mentoring. However, a comprehensive and critical analysis of these issues goes beyond the scope of my study. This literature exploration draws on the literature to the extent that it contributes towards the development of a theoretical framework for peer mentoring (TF-PM) in higher education. I also draw on those perspectives pertinent to my study to inform the analysis of my data theoretically.

3.4.1 Jacobi's perspective of mentoring

Jacobi (1991:505) focuses specifically on the academic success of undergraduate students. She commences by forging a connection between mentoring and the academic success of undergraduate students, and she subsequently states that mentoring is increasingly being utilized as a retention and enrichment strategy by universities focusing on the undergraduate students. Similarly, Crisp and Cruz (2007:533) report that studies on mentoring conducted between 1990 and 2007 found that mentoring had a positive impact on indicators of student success. However, much still needs to be done in this area.

Jacobi's (1991:505) concern about the lack of a widely accepted operational definition of mentoring is still highly relevant, as argued earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 1 where this lacuna was pointed out as one of the lacunae in the field. Jacobi (506) also explored the literature that covers issues such as undergraduate success, a theoretical foundation, and methodological approaches.

In her review, Jacobi (1991) abstracts 15 definitions from her exploration of the literature covering a period of 11 years (1978–1989). She selected only those definitions developed by authors who had developed generic descriptions as opposed to descriptions limited to a particular setting or population (510). These definitions also had to be original and supported by empirical data and include at least three functions or roles of mentors. Finally, these definitions had to be fairly detailed and the authors frequently cited in articles or reports on mentoring.

Jacobi (1991:510) does not indicate what qualified as original definitions or what constituted being "cited frequently". She proceeds to discuss different groupings of these functions and summarizes them into three components of the mentoring relationship: emotional and psychological support, direct assistance with career and professional development, and role modelling. Jacobi (1991) approached mentoring from the perspective of a mentor only, which is unidirectional. By contrast, I approached my study from a relational perspective, while acknowledging the three components identified by Jacobi (1991) as being pertinent to my study. The following issues raised by Jacobi (1991) as being important to higher education were also applicable to my study: the efficacy of formal mentoring, the availability and prevalence of mentors, and the motivation to act as

mentors. These issues were discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.3, under the heading of relational cultural theory.

Jacobi (1991) does not conclude her exploration of literature with a definition of the concept of mentoring. Instead, she concludes by postulating five components about which she holds there is agreement about their commonality according to her research corpus. She argues that these commonalities at least provide a foundation for later work on the concept of mentoring. These five consensus components identified by Jacobi (1991) are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Consensus components of mentoring

Component	Short description
Helping relationship	It is achievement-driven Provision of assistance and support by mentor
Includes any or all of 3 broad components	Emotional and psychological support Direct assistance with career and professional development Role modelling
Reciprocal relationship	Both mentor and protégé benefit - the benefit can be emotional or tangible
Relationships are personal	It requires direct interaction between the two parties. It does not have to be long-term or intimate
Mentors have relatively more experience, influence and achievement than the protégé	This relative difference is contextualised within the organisation or institution

(Extracted from Jacobi 1991)

The components listed in Table 3.3 correlate with the essentials of mentoring discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.3, in the section on relational cultural theory and were used to inform the development of a theoretical framework for peer mentoring in higher education as presented in Chapter 5.

3.4.2 Powell's perspective of mentoring

In her report entitled *Academic Tutoring and Mentoring: A Literature Review*, Powell (1997) strongly agrees with Jacobi (1991) on a number of issues. Both researchers hold

that mentoring is personal (a one-to-one relationship), that there is a knowledge/resource and age differential, and that mentors render different kinds of support (it is a helping relationship). However, unlike Jacobi (1991), Powell (1997:39) supports the view that there should be interpersonal attachment of sufficient intensity to bring about identification between protégé and mentor. This social distance is also important because the "mentor's behaviour and values have to be meaningful and visible to the youth, and the youth must be able to emulate the mentor without conflict, suspicion or failure" (49). This resonates with the notion of congruency of values between mentor and mentee. Powell also identifies socialization and skills development as general goals of mentoring programmes. Socialization is a strong element of transition into higher education. This raises the issue of the mentor's 'inside knowledge' as previously discussed, Powell also draws a distinction between 'natural' and 'planned' (informal and formal) mentoring programmes. It is clear from Powell's discussion that she is more supportive of 'natural' programmes but acknowledges that there is an expectation in effective programme models that the mentors will provide assistance and guidance to the younger persons for them to be successful.

3.4.3 Hall's perspective of mentoring

In 2003, Hall explored the mentoring of young persons aged 16–24 years who needed extra support in order to gain access to and participate in post-school education, training and employment. This was a group at risk of social exclusion due to a range of psychosocial, emotional and economic challenges. Many of these conditions resonate strongly with those of the cohort of students in my study.

In his exploration of the literature, Hall (2003) included both the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK), but excluded articles on business and professional development. Hall (2003) asked a number of questions, some of which were pertinent to my study, for example: What is mentoring? What are the positive outcomes? What works and what does not? What are the views of mentors and mentees?

Hall (2003:8) also did not present a definition but rather explored the complexity of mentoring and came to the conclusion that there is a variety of mentoring types, each of which is located in a multidimensional space comprising different mentoring dimensions. Table 3.4 lists the dimensions that were suggested by Hall (2003).

Table 3.4: Mentoring dimensions posited by Hall (2003)

	Dimension	Description
1	Origin of the mentoring relationship	To what extent does it occur naturally or artificially/ (informally or formally)?
2	Purpose of mentoring	To what extent is it instrumental (inducting the mentee into a craft, profession, institution) or expressive (guiding the mentee to 'responsible adulthood')?
3	Nature of relationship	One-to-one or one-to-group
4	Site of mentoring	Site-based (e.g. college, university) or community-based (family, community structure or wider social sphere)

(Extracted from Hall 2003)

In my own research, I considered the dimensions listed in Table 3.4 specifically in terms of their descriptors as outlined in the right-hand column of the table.

The Hall (2003) approach (see Table 3.4), which identifies essential dimensions, seems to have been influenced by or modelled on Roberts (2000). As in the case of other researchers, Hall (2003) did not generate a definition of mentoring from the literature exploration but also introduced a section dealing with criticisms of mentoring. This is a clear break from the one-sided litany of benefits approach to a more open and honest critical stance in the tradition of Colley (2003). Three criticisms raised by Hall (2003:4–6) that are relevant to the current study are the alleged tendency of mentoring to reproduce the status quo, and to disregard the social context, as well as the location of the causes of social and academic exclusion to the detriment of individuals concerned.

The first criticism, the potential reproduction of the status quo, raises questions about the critical issue of mentoring as a means of assisting students in their transition from high school to higher education and questions the extent to which it merely reproduces the status quo as presented in the higher education context. Gulam and Zulfiqar (1998) pose the following two questions: What do the different mentoring practitioners and projects prepare mentors for? Who is going to benefit from these actions?

The first question is critical to the nature of the institutional culture. If it is ultra-conservative and static, the mentees could be reduced to mere cogs to fit into a big institutional machine. This would defeat the purpose of higher education, which is to grow,

develop and allow students to self-actualize. If students are mentored merely to fit in, the answer to the second question is clear: the institution will be the chief beneficiary as the status quo is perpetuated and mentees (in transition) are made to 'fit' as opposed to being made to grow and develop into independent thinkers and doers. The institution of higher education then becomes a stagnation point as opposed to a dynamic agent of change and a growth point for both students and society. This posed a serious question with regard to my own research as will be evident from my response as explained in Chapters 4, 7 and 8 of this dissertation.

The second issue that Hall (2003:4) addresses is the way in which the social context seems to be disregarded in modern versions of mentoring. It is an approach that seeks to locate the deficits in the mentees by suggesting that it is a result of their presumed inability or under-preparedness to fit into higher education institutions. Colley (2003:28) comments that this approach "place[s] a moral interpretation upon social inclusion, and pathologises those considered to be socially excluded". Any sign of independent activity or thinking can then be construed as a transgression of the dominant norms. In my own study, these presumed deficits could result from the norms of the institution of higher education. I believe that diversity and the individuality of the mentees are important and should not be disregarded in favour of dominant norms. Failure to consider this possibility could result in pathologizing and branding first-year mentees as deficient individuals' who have to be 'empowered' to fit into the institution.

The concerns raised by Hall (2003) are pertinent to my study, which deals with the mentoring of students in transition from high school to higher education. The degree to which higher education institutions embrace independent thinking and the development of students will determine institutional culture and practice. This challenges the practice of mentoring as a mode of transition for students into higher education and how the mentees and mentors are understood until power relations are played out. I address these concerns in Chapters 7 and 8 where I engage with the data.

3.4.4 Ehrich, Hansford and Tennent's perspective of mentoring

Ehrich, Hansford and Tennent (2004) compiled databases from the fields of education, business and medicine. They discuss the following themes across the different databases: the meaning of mentoring, common strengths and weaknesses, and methodological issues.

The authors focus primarily on formal mentoring programmes similar to the way the peer-mentoring dyads in my study are embedded in a formal mentoring programme.

Ehrich *et al.* (like Hall 2003:518) also point out some of the weaknesses in mentoring. They set out, as one of the aims of their exploration of the literature, to identify weaknesses in mentoring. Their response to the finding from their literature exploration was that a great deal of writing on the concept of mentoring as experienced in education and across other professional disciplines was reported to be an overwhelmingly positive learning process for both mentors and mentees. Their exploration also confirmed that there was no substantial reporting on the negative outcomes of mentoring. In this way, Ehrich *et al.* (2004) made an important contribution towards lifting the taboo on reporting on the weaknesses and negative effects of mentoring, thus drawing into the debates on mentoring what was probably regarded as anathema: a critical and balanced perspective on the mentoring phenomenon. I also attempted to be open to both positive and negative feedback on mentoring in my study.

Ehrich *et al.* (2004:520) identified the following concerns from their literature exploration: a lack of time for mentoring, poor planning, a mismatch of mentors and mentees, a lack of understanding about the mentoring process, and a lack of access to mentors by minority groups. The two negative outcomes most reported on were mismatches and the lack of time and mentoring expertise (525).

The review by Ehrich *et al.* (2004) shows that the above-mentioned concerns were shared by both mentors and mentees. Time is a critical resource in higher education and needs to be carefully managed. It is also important for mentors and mentees to get along as mentoring is essentially a relationship. I emphasised the importance of relationships as a basis for peer mentoring in my study.

The rest of the negative mentoring outcomes reported were a lack of training, an inability to understand programme goals, the extra burden and responsibility of mentoring, a lack of flexibility and a lack of trust. Ehrich *et al.* (2004) point out that these concerns were found to be common to both mentors and mentees. This is also the position I took in my research.

The positive outcomes most often cited for mentors and mentees in the Ehrich *et al.* (2004) exploration are depicted in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Four most positive outcomes cited for mentors and mentees

	Mentors	Mentees
1	Collegiality, collaboration and networking	Support, empathy, encouragement, counselling and friendship
2	Reflection (on practices, ideas and values)	Help with teaching strategies, subject knowledge and resources
3	Facilitation of professional development	Discussion: sharing ideas, information, problems, with advice from peers
4	Personal satisfaction, reward or growth	Feedback, positive reinforcement, constructive criticism

(Extracted from Ehrich *et al*. 2004)

Ehrich *et al.* (2004:531) make two important observations: firstly, that mentoring has significant benefits for mentors and mentees in spite of its limitations; secondly, that mentoring supports mentors and mentees emotionally, personally and contributes to their career development. I concur with Ehrich *et al.* (2004:533) that the mentoring relationship is highly complex, dynamic and interpersonal and thus requires time, interest and commitment of mentors and mentees as well as strong institutional support.

Like Jacobi (1991), Ehrich *et al.* (2004) approached mentoring from the broad perspective of business, psychology, and education but focused on mentoring relationships in an educational context.

3.4.5 Crisp and Cruze's perspective of mentoring

Crisp and Cruze (2009) set out to analyse and synthesize empirical studies pertaining to mentoring college students critically. I similarly focused on students in higher education and utilized their insights to inform my study.

Crisp and Cruze (2009:525-526) argue that mentoring in the North American context has developed into a national priority, given the proliferation of formalised mentoring programmes and institutional practices at different levels. They argue that there is still no consistent definition of the concept of mentoring, that it is mainly a-theoretical, and that

there is still a need for appropriate qualitative designs (526). This situation has shown little development since the Jacobi (1991) literature exploration.

I did not attempt to develop a consistent definition of mentoring in a broad, general sense of the word that can be applied under all conditions. Instead I developed a theoretical framework for peer mentoring (TF-PM) in higher education which I applied to analyse my data (see Chapters 7 and 8). I espouse the view that mentoring is highly contextualised and that no definition can be definitive and applicable to all contexts. A further challenge is that mentoring, like all other human experiences, is highly personal and individualised. I thus accept that mentoring could be experienced differently in different dyads and by different dyadic partners. Crisp and Cruze (2009) do not explain why there is still an absence of mentoring theories or a common definition for the concept of mentoring since the Jacobi 1991 report.

Crisp and Cruze (2009) confirm that there is a lack of a consistent definition of mentoring. This absence of at least a common understanding of mentoring within the context of higher education makes it extremely challenging to compare and learn from different studies and experiences in the field. It creates conceptual dissonance that could turn vigorous and meaningful debates into speaking at cross purposes.

After their exploration of the definitions and characteristics of mentoring, Crisp and Cruze (2009:528) concluded that there is still consensus about the following three points raised by Jacobi (1991): that mentoring relationships are focused on the growth and accomplishment of individuals; that mentoring experiences may include support for professional and career development; and that mentoring relationships are both personal and reciprocal.

My study supports the notion that mentoring relationships create spaces and opportunities for growth, are mutually beneficial, and assist mentees as students with their future career development.

3.5 CONCEPT OF MENTORING

In the course of exploring the concept of mentoring, I considered theoretical and conceptual analyses, as well as exploratory approaches, to engaging with the concept. It became evident to me that there was still a number of definitional challenges current in the

literature (D'Abate 2009), and I understood the importance of arriving, if not at a definition, at least at some conceptual understanding for the purposes of my study. Given the complex (Crawford *et al.* 2013) and contextual nature of mentoring (Jones 2012), a single definition did not seem feasible (Haggard *et al*. 2011). I thus adopted the approach that Simoni *et al.* (2014) took with regard to peer mentoring. I therefore selected key elements from the literature for the concept of peer-mentoring that would serve as a definitional framework for the study. The key elements I selected link back to the three theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 2 and link forward to the key elements selected to form the basis of the conceptual understanding of peer mentoring, a critical concept applicable to my study.

Firstly, it is clear from the literature that mentoring is a relationship (Darwin & Palmer 2009; Beltman & Schaeben 2012; George & Mampilly 2012;)—more particularly, a supportive relationship (Crawford *et al.* 2013) that is mutually beneficial for the growth and development of the dyadic partners and the benefit of relational depth (George & Mampilly 2012; Rekha & Ganesh 2012). I therefore selected social exchange theory (see Chapter 5) to explain this element of mutual growth. The mentors and mentees grow in the context of the relationship and in interaction (Beltman & Schaeben 2012) with each other, hence the use of social constructionism as a lens in this study (see Chapter 2).

Secondly, both mentors and mentees develop trust (George & Mampilly 2012; Preston *et al.* 2014) that leads to friendship (Chan 2008; Beltman & Schaeben 2012). In my research, I opted to follow the Stewart and Kreuger (1996) argument that friendship promotes a more egalitarian relationship, a crucial feature of peer mentoring, in which both parties share the mentoring roles, thus allowing the relationship to become a safe space (George & Mampilly 2012) of growth and learning (Ehrich *et al.* 2004; Darwin & Palmer 2009). The mentoring relationship develops a sense of closeness (Haggard *et al*. 2011) and accessibility for both parties and a strong interpersonal attachment develops between them (George & Mampilly 2012). Close relationships also create the capacity to accommodate vulnerability as a positive feature of such relationships. Attachment theory as an additional lens through which to explore close relationships is discussed in Chapter 5.

Thirdly, there is strong agreement in the literature that reciprocity is a key element of mentoring (Crisp & Cruze 2009; Haggard *et al.* 2011; Jones & Brown 2011). Reciprocity gives value to social constructionism (Mullen 2009) and is underpinned by a strong sense

of other-directedness and seeing the needs of others (Crawford *et al*. 2013), a prominent feature of the philosophy of Ubuntu (Muwanga-Zake 2009; Geber & Keane 2013).

Finally, role modelling is mentioned in virtually all the literature consulted (Haggard *et al*. 2011; George & Mampilly 2012). Role-modelling theory was selected as a lens for making sense of the data in my study (see Chapters 5, 7 and 8).

Ehrich *et al*. (2004) point out that very few studies refer to weaknesses such as lack of time, expertise and access. This situation has not changed significantly since 2004. I therefore also looked at both positive and negative effects of mentoring in my study (see Chapters 7 and 8).

3.6 DEVELOPMENTS IN MENTORING

Mentoring, and in particular mentoring relationships, have been challenged by the changing nature of the world and the spaces in which young people find themselves. In my research, I explored current trends in mentoring, with a focus on peer mentoring as a key concept in my study. This exploration reflected on formal and informal mentoring, whether traditional or non-traditional, the relational arrangement of mentoring relationships and, finally, key attributes leading to a conceptual understanding of peer mentoring for the purpose of my study.

3.6.1 Formal and informal mentoring

Allen, Eby and Lentz (2006) and Kram and Ragins (2007) hold that whether a mentoring relationship was initiated formally or informally is an important indicator to promote a better understanding of the quality, structure, process and expectations of the mentoring phenomenon. Baugh Fagerson-Eland (2007) posits that the distinction between formal and informal mentoring, in addition to the above, also determines the duration and the type and quality of the training provided.

Mullen (2012), in reflecting on mentoring in the educational context, uses the terms voluntary and mandated mentoring for formal and informal mentoring. Mullen argues that mandatory or formal mentoring can reduce mentoring to a mechanistic process with set objectives and processes that can be prescriptive and restrictive. She makes the point that these objectives, structures and expectations are determined at the outset of the mentoring relationship. This could have a restrictive but also a directive impact on the programme in

a positive way. It helps to set the tone and guides the mentoring process for a clearly prescribed period. A set period for a mentoring programme might help both mentor and mentee to focus (Mullen 2012) and avoid confusion in terms of expectations and roles in the traditional sense. However, Baugh and Fagerson-Eland (2007) raise the caveat that due to constraints and prescriptiveness in formal mentoring relationships, benefits such as life-long friendships, accruing from formal relationships, are less likely to develop. Varney (2009) argues that informal mentoring relationships can increase the holistic development of the dyadic partners and refers to this holistic mentoring experience as humanistic mentoring. Mullen (2009) describes informal mentoring relationships as "… self-initiated, unplanned and left to chance". Varney (2009) views the creation of involuntary or informal mentoring as a spontaneous process that can be the result of creative communication.

Both formal and informal mentoring can contribute to the growth and development of mentors and mentees. It is the culture of the institution (organization) that plays a critical role in fostering effective mentoring relationships (Kram & Ragins 2007) and providing holistic growth experiences for the dyadic partners. It is important to note that the institutional (organizational) culture has an influence that can either promote or restrict the formation of informal mentoring relationships.

My study is situated at a meeting point between formal (mandated) and informal (voluntary) mentoring. The mentoring programme itself is a formal programme of the university based in the first-year residences. The mentees found themselves in mandatory mentoring relationships with mentors who had volunteered to participate in the programme. They could extend the goals of the programme by regarding and negotiating needs-based goals with the mentees as these emerged. Consequently, the goals were both institutionally oriented and psycho-developmental at the same time. This was also borne out by the analysis of my data and represents a feature of both the formal mentoring programme at a first-year university residence and the nature of the dyadic relationships embedded in this programme. The reason for the distinction between formal and informal mentoring relationships here is that it is part of the research context and also a response to Haggard *et al*. (2011) and Allen *et al*. (2008) who posit that this distinction is not often made in the research reported on mentoring relationships.

3.6.2 Traditional and non-traditional mentoring

Traditional mentoring is presented as a relationship that is not egalitarian. The mentor is a senior, older, more knowledgeable and experienced person than the protégé (D'Abate 2009; Jones & Brown 2011 Preston *et al*. 2014). The protégé is thus deemed to be dependent on the mentor for both career and psycho-social support (Russen & Adams 1997; Roberts 2000; Scanlon 2009). The traditional role of the mentor is also that of an advisor and professional guide (Preston *et al*. 2014). Karcher *et al*. (2006) state that adults of 55 years and older have the capacity to advise and guide as they have accumulated wisdom and practical experience in the course of their lives. These older adults have been utilised as mentors to youth. This intergenerational mentoring is a fairly new mentoring structure (Karcher *et al.* 2006) and could be employed in local contexts where there are large numbers of first-generation university students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Karcher (2007:3) presents cross-age peer mentoring as "… a unique and somewhat different approach to mentoring than the better known adult-with-youth mentoring model … which informally or for a short duration "pair younger youth with older youth for the purpose of providing the younger youth with guidance, social support or instruction". The mentors and mentees are "peers" only insofar as both are viewed by society as non-adults (or youth). The mentor is still the older and wiser and there are focussed developmental goals (Karcher *et al.* 2006). These programmes were school-based, using fellow learners as mentors and implemented as stand-alone programmes like Big Brothers/Big Sisters America (Karcher et al. 2006). In the South African context, this programme was adapted for university students to improve outreach to communities where they mentor grade 9 youths at high schools (Mdepa & Tshiwula 2012). At a local university the programme was appropriately called Brawam-Siswam, in the IsiXhosa slang- one of the official indigenous languages- in which brawam means 'big brother' and siswam means 'big sister' (Mdepa & Tshiwula 2012).

The relationship is still not egalitarian as there is a power differential based on age and academic status.

Although cross-age peer mentoring is a unique mentoring relationship, it is still very traditional in terms of being one-on-one and non-egalitarian. Darwin and Palmer (2009) argue that, when the mentor holds the power and knowledge alone, there is little chance for transformation as the relationship is often protective and paternalistic. The authors posit

that traditional models like these are no longer appropriate as the "… reproduction of the status quo is not what higher education institutions require in today's knowledge economy (126)". Gannon and Maher (2012) point out that recent developments such as reverse mentoring challenge the unequal power arrangements in traditional mentoring relationships and reverse the roles of the two parties. The young and technologically advanced mentor supports the older and more senior mentor (Jones & Brown 2011).

In the traditional sense, there is a dyadic approach to mentoring. However, a person is not embedded in a single relationship at a time. This is also the case with mentoring relationships, and almost three decades ago Kram (1985) already drew our attention to what she called a constellation of relationships. This implies that protégés are engaged in a range of relationships operating as a network for their support and development (Higgens, Dobrow & Chandler 2008; Haggard *et al.* 2011).

Non-traditional mentoring has manifested itself in many new and hybrid forms (Kram & Ragins 2007). The constellation of relationships posited by Kram (1985), where the protégé is involved in multiple mentoring dyads, has evolved into social mentoring arrangements where the protégé is involved with other protégés and mentors in a broader social support network. This is an extension of the dyadic to a polyadic mentoring context. A number of polyadic hybrid forms such as cluster mentoring and mentoring circles (Kram & Ragins 2007) and a mentoring mosaic or academic network (Mullen 2009; 2012) have emerged. These hybrid forms challenge the traditional notion of a dyad comprised of an experienced and knowledgeable member and a novice in a non-egalitarian relationship where the novice is the recipient of the expert's advice and wisdom. This position has been consistently challenged in the literature from a number of perspectives, with some writers challenging the authoritative and transmissive mentoring relationship, as Mullen (2009; 2012) points out. Kram and Ragins (2007) explain how our understanding of Kram's (1985) observation that individuals draw support from a variety of supportive relationships has been facilitated by the emergence of social network theory. This theory, Kram and Ragins (2007), argue has contributed towards our making sense of the different dimensions of developmental networks and therefore also the multiple sources from which mentees draw assistance. Although these developmental networks can have both positive and negative outcomes, research suggests that their relationships can extend their benefits to the individual beyond the confines of the primary mentoring dyad (Haggard *et al*. 2011; Jones 2012). Finally, Mullen (2009) develops the argument that mentoring as a type of

developmental and learning relationship ultimately brings mentors and mentees together in developmental networks or a "mini learning community" (Mullen 2009:13).

The notion of social networks has taken on a whole new meaning with the development of social media as potential social development networks or groups. Mullen (2009) mentions tele-mentoring as an alternative form of mentoring. This has extended the capacity of the mentor in terms of accessibility but has also seriously challenged the personal face-to-face characteristic of the mentoring relationship. This is a characteristic lacking in most forms of electronic mentoring.

Tele-mentoring has introduced techno-mentoring which includes electronic mentoring or 'e-mentoring' and a host of other "e-possibilities". Here one could consider potential hybrid forms such as "bbm-mentoring' and "chat rooms" as developmental networks and other current modes of communication such as Twitter and WhatsApp. Ware and Ramos (2013) used Facebook in their mentoring project, employing social media with first-generation college students, and Williams *et al*. (2012) refers to the utilization of chat messages in e-mentoring. Ware and Ramos (2013) argue that some forms of electronic mentoring are effective in providing informational support but lack the capacity to provide emotional and instrumental support. They propose that, given these limitations of e-mentoring, a blended model of face-to-face and e-mentoring should be explored. This blended form of mentoring is also supported by Williams *et al*. (2012). The closest "e-mentoring" can emulate face-to-face relationships seem to be Skype. This is a format that needs to be researched as yet another possibility as it is part of the reality of young potential mentors and mentees.

In the context of the diverse nature of institutions of higher learning, e-mentoring can be used to mask race in order to allow mentors and mentees to focus on common issues and needs (Ensher & Murphy 2007; Kram & Ragins 2007; Haggard *et al.* 2011). The authors Kram and Ragins (2007) make the insightful comment that, although e-mentoring can facilitate non-judgemental relationship building in diversity contexts, it could also have the adverse effect of limiting diversity awareness and sensitivity. They conclude that, "… once the relationship is established, it may be best for the relationship to transform to face-to-face in order for members to obtain optimal states of learning and growth from their relationship" (678). Haggard *et al*. (2011) seem to have similar misgivings and state: "An important question is whether one can form a mentoring relationship solely using

electronic forms of communication". Thus, the suggestion for blended face-to-face mentoring (Gannon & Maher 2012; Williams *et al*. 2012; Ware & Ramos 2013), which could include SKYPE (see Gannon & Maher 2012), appears to represent a practical compromise solution to this dilemma. Whichever way one approaches this question, one must face the reality that, given the "technological changes, social networking sites, and so on, we expect that the amount of electronic mentoring will continue to increase and deserve researchers' attention" (Haggard *et al*. 2011, 297).

The research on e-mentoring will also need to consider the organizational context, in the case of my study, that of higher education. The increase in tele-education, e-learning and 'MOOCS' (the virtual university) and online degree programmes also create a viable context within which e-mentoring may become more prevalent as a feature of mentoring in higher education.

The following section explains how the construct of peer mentoring was conceptualised in my research, with special emphasis on the extended meaning of the adjective "peer". The explanations will draw on Chapter 2, as well is on the first part of the current chapter, to reflect on mentoring as a way of describing peer mentoring in the context of my study.

3.6.3 Peer mentoring

The traditional understanding or expectation is that the mentor is an older and wiser person who influences the psycho-social, academic and professional growth of a younger protégé (Trorey & Blamire 2006; Preston *et al.* 2014). The belief that the mentor should be older and wiser than the mentee is shared by Karcher (2006), who states that "… to consider the adolescent an 'older and wiser' mentor, there should be an age difference of at least two years". Karcher (2006) uses the term 'cross-age' mentoring to address this age difference in the context of peer mentoring. This typifies mentoring as essentially a hierarchical relationship with a set power and age configuration. Budge (2006), however, points out that peer mentors are increasingly being used as interventions in higher education.

This application of peer interventions is an international practice which targets a broad range of diverse settings including health, business and education (Simoni *et al*. 2011). Peers assisting peers, however, is an ancient and natural phenomenon. Student-focussed support programmes in higher education have become an essential component of student engagement (Heirdsfield *et al*. 2008; Power *et al*. 2011), especially in the context of peer-

mentoring (Power *et al.* 2011; Budge 2006). The literature is replete with evidence that similar age or peer mentors are effective in supporting mentees with psycho-social issues and academic challenges (Loots 2009; Haggard *et al.* 2011; Preston *et al.* 2014) and this brings into question the age difference valued in traditional mentoring. The literature refers to these similar-age peer mentors as "upper class' peer mentors (Holt & Berwise 2012) or experienced peers (Godshalk & Sosik 2003) indicating their superiority in university experience and hence their capacity to support first-year students with the challenges of transition from high school to the university context. Scanlon (2009:76), in developing metaphors for research on mentors at a university, concludes that the peer mentors, given their experience of the university, "… meet the traveller [mentee; new first-year student] as one [mentor] who has been there before them". In the Scanlon study (2009), there were first-year mentees who were students of a mature age and older than their mentors but less experienced in terms of the transition to and their experience of university. This implies that second- or third-year students who are older in terms of their 'university age' might in some instances be younger than their mentees. They act as mentors purely on the basis of their experience and success at university. They are not cross-aged mentors as proposed by Karcher (2006) but draw on their experience or 'career age', which Darwin (2000) regards as more important than age in a mentoring relationship.

Peer mentors are not only similar in age but also in position (Terrion & Leonard 2007) as fellow undergraduates in my study. They are, however, a year or two ahead of their mentees academically and can draw on a more immediate and relatable experience (Grant-Vallone & Ensher 2000) to support and give them access to the inside story of the university context. Their closeness in age (Haggard *et al*. 2011), as well as their proximity in experience to their mentees (Terrion 2012), makes them more credible sources of support and the mentees can identify with them more easily than in the case of more senior mentors in the traditional mentoring context. The peer mentor can also offer friendship on a more egalitarian basis than in the case of traditional mentoring relationships (Haggard *et al*. 2011; Terrion 2012). Peer mentoring also provides more of a two-way exchange and reciprocity (Haggard *et al*. 2011). In peer mentoring, both parties take turns in sharing the lead in giving and receiving support or guidance (Ensher *et al*. 2001). Kram and Isabella (1985) point out that this degree of mutuality is what distinguishes peer mentoring from traditional as well as step-ahead mentoring. Homans (1974) posits in his Social Exchange theory that reciprocity is an essential element for partner satisfaction in dyadic

relationships. It is the level of reciprocity in the relationship that determines the degree of give and take between the partners. Peer mentoring relationships, because of their degree of similarity in terms of age and experience (Terrion & Leonard 2007; Haggard *et al*. 2011); create the possibility of reciprocity and openness towards each other. Both partners benefit from as well as contribute towards the mentoring relationship (Beltman & Schaeben 2012) in their mutually created experience and context. Peer mentoring thus creates a mutually beneficial experience for mentors and mentees (Holt & Berwise 2012).

Peer mentors are consequently more accessible as they also share the same networks (Simoni *et al*. 2013) and physical space—in my study, the university space and more specifically the first-year residences. Peer mentors thus become more credible models of possibility because of their similarity to their mentees and provide them with more realistic advice and opportunities (Simoni *et al.* 2013). Peer mentors, like their mentees, are also lay people with no formal training or qualifications. Their non-professional status increases their authenticity and proximity to mentees who find them more approachable. This similarity informs the belief that "… people who have a shared experience of a common problem have unique resources to offer one another" (Medvene 1992:52).

The lack of consistency in defining or using the term 'mentoring' is one of the most apparent challenges in the mentoring literature (Ensher *et al.* 2001; Budge 2006; Haggard *et al.* 2011). The same challenge confronts the concept of peer mentoring (Budge 2006; Simoni *et al*. 2011; Holt & Berwise 2012). While it might not have been possible or even practical to attempt a comprehensive definition of "peerness" in peer mentoring for the sake of clarity and focus, it nevertheless remained important to distil elements essential for the conception of "peerness" from the literature consulted as applied or applicable to my study.

There have, however, been attempts to define peer mentoring. Tindall (1995) construed peer mentoring as a collection of different forms of helping behaviour adopted by non-professionals to help others. This element of helping others displays other-directedness and caring. The fact that the mentors are lay people helps to construct a more egalitarian relationship as both mentors and mentees share the status of being lay people in terms of mentoring. Terrion and Leonard (2007) also describe mentoring as a helping relationship and point out that the two individuals should be of more or less the same age and status. This emphasises the equality in the relationship. They add the dimension or type of

relationship; that is, formal or informal. Terrion and Leonard (2007) use the concept "functions" as opposed to "helping behaviour" in reference to the roles of the participants and their intentionality in terms of their relationship.

Rather than attempt to define peerness or peer mentoring, I followed Simon *et al.'s* thinking and proposed the following four characteristics or conditions which I regarded as crucial for understanding peer mentoring in the context of my study:

Firstly, there had to be a similarity in terms of personal characteristics and status between the mentor and mentee. The most common characteristic with which to define peerness is age. In my study, it was important that in general the mentors should not be much older than the mentees—that is, there had to be a shared similarity in terms of age. The reason is that it is from this proximity of age and experience that the mentors embark on a journey with the mentees as they engage in a helping and reciprocal relationship.

Contextual boundedness constituted the second element of peer mentoring in my study. The participants shared university, residence, mentoring programme and mentoring dyads as common contexts and spaces of possibility. In my study, a common experience of these multiple contexts, both academically and socially, contributed towards the conception of peerness or similarity. Both the mentors and mentees were confronted by the challenges of transition, belongingness and the academic enterprise.

Thirdly, status functioned as a key element of peerness in my study in which all the participants were full-time undergraduate students. Since they are not professionally trained, their lay status supported equality in the relationship which created closeness and mutual accessibility. Such closeness usually brings about empathy and trust which generates friendships between mentors and mentees.

Finally, reciprocity and co-sharing formed the last elements of peer mentoring in my study. Reciprocity in my study drew on the other-directedness of the participants, which empowered them to benefit from and grow in the relationship thus facilitating their transition from secondary to tertiary education. These elements served as a definitional framework for researching peerness and peer mentoring in my study.

3.7 CONCLUSION

For the purposes of conceptualising and structuring my research, I drew on a number of perspectives from the literature pertinent to my study to develop definitional frameworks for both mentoring and peer mentoring. Together with the other insights gained from the research underpinning Chapters 4 and 5 of the dissertation, these perspectives informed the development of a practical framework for peer mentoring in higher education (see Chapter 5). In the following chapter, I report on the research conducted into mentoring in higher education.

CHAPTER 4

MENTORING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

"… the role of peer mentoring is one that embraces student commitment to and integration with the educational process and the institution and that the degree to which a student is assisted in social integration in university life is a good predictor of graduation potential."

(Treston 1999:236)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a critical discussion of the literature on mentoring in higher education that was consulted in the course of my research. Firstly, mentoring was contextualised as a topic belonging to the research field of higher education. Secondly, I focussed on the transition from high school to university, as well as the challenges that emanate from this process. Thirdly, the role of mentoring as a mechanism to facilitate this transition was explored. Finally, the critical exploration was utilized to contribute towards a conceptual framework for peer mentoring dyads in higher education.

4.2 MENTORING: A TOPIC IN HIGHER EDUCATION AS A FIELD OF STUDY

Bitzer and Wilkinson (2009), investigating higher education as a field of study, plot its historical development both internationally and locally. The authors compare the international and local (South African) conceptualisations of the concept of higher education and suggest a possible research agenda for higher education in South Africa. Three of the conclusions of the Bitzer and Wilkinson (2009) study are of particular relevance to the current study. These conclusions are:

Student-related matters enjoy a high priority both nationally and internationally.

Higher education studies should engage more with theory as there is a paucity of theoretically informed studies in this field.

Higher education studies should be regarded as an interdisciplinary field.

It makes good sense that student-related matters should enjoy priority as they seem to have persistently assumed high currency for the past two decades in higher education (Bitzer &

Wilkinson 2009). This confirms the findings of Chow and Healey (2008), who indicate that there had been an increase internationally in students entering universities and student issues being put on the agenda of higher education. This trend has also been evident in South Africa, especially since 1994 (Akoojee & Nkomo 2007). In this regard, it should be borne in mind that students seeking access to higher education bring with them a range of demands that exacerbate the issues of transition, attrition and academic success. It is fortuitous that the current study has explored the transition from high school to higher education as it is emerging as a critical issue for higher education in South Africa at this juncture.

4.3 TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The transition from high school to university and concomitant adjustment to university life seems to be regarded as one of the most crucial challenges that both students and institutions face. For instance, Budny *et al.* (2010) point out that transitions form an integral part of life and those students and all other key players, for example parents, academic and other university staff must show some understanding in this regard. Budny *et al.* (2010) also note that the transition from high school to higher education can be very challenging (also see Scutter *et al.* 2011). In fact, Terrion and Leonard (2007) describe students who struggle to adapt as being vulnerable, and Mattanah *et al*. (2010) highlight the fact that the transition to higher education could disrupt the social networks that first-year students have at home. Kagee, Naidoo and Mahatey (1997) contend that the adjustment to higher education, for first-generation first-year students in particular, is not only difficult but can also be described as traumatic.

A number of key issues, concerns or challenges emerged from the literature on the transition of first-year students to higher education. Gibney *et al*. (2011) mention the following three key issues: transition and motivation, student expectations, and time management. The authors found that social integration and coping academically were the two concerns most frequently cited by first-year students. Smailes and Gannon-Leary (2011) also draw attention to the social integration of first-year students as a critical concern. Budny *et al.* (2010) name academic, family and personal challenges and add time management to the list. Chow and Healey (2008) elaborate on the challenge of the potential distancing from family support structures and displacement that first-year students could suffer and also refer to social and intellectual challenges. This view is

echoed by Hurtado *et al.* (2007) who posit that first-year students seek to be connected (to have a sense of belonging) and want information (to cope academically).

Chow and Healey (2008) are two of a small number of writers who point out that transition, which is a natural phenomenon (Budny *et al.* 2010), can be positive and offer new opportunities for personal growth and self-development. Budny *et al.* (2010) regard these opportunities as exciting and claim that these transitional experiences can give students invaluable insights into their own lives and what is possible for them to become. Based on my study, I concur with this view and argue that it is exactly because of this notion of transition as a necessary growth opportunity that mentoring for transition is a critical aspect of university support for first-year students.

4.4 MENTORING: AN INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

In the light of all these challenges and concerns, it became clear to me that transition and the first year are critical to first-year students (Hurtado *et al.* 2007; Gibney *et al.* 2011). Worldwide, the number of students entering university is increasing rapidly (Chow & Healy 2008). Their transition is crucial to their adaptation and success at these universities (Chow & Healey 2008; Gibney *et al.* 2011; Scutter *et al*. 2011). In this regard, Hurtado *et al.* (2007) express the view that it is essentially the responsibility of universities to develop the successive generations of scientific talent for individuals and the public service. Higher education institutions, in a response to this call and against the backdrop of the challenges facing first- year students, have adopted a variety of methods and approaches to meet these challenges, for example peer tutoring, community care, academic involvement and supplemental instruction (Colvin & Ashman 2010).

Terrion and Leonard (2007) point out that peer mentoring is widely regarded as an effective manner in which to address the challenges facing first-year students, with particular reference to transition, retention and adaptation to the sociocultural and physical environments of universities (Kram 1985; Johnson 2002; McLean 2004; Chow & Healey 2008). In an evaluation of a university peer-mentoring programme, Terrion, Philion and Leonard (2007) concluded that, where insecure first-year students were mentored by more experienced peers, these students learned to navigate their way through the university and improved their chances of success. Having drawn on and adapted mentoring as a mechanism to address these challenges, the authors further posit that peer mentoring is one

of the most effective interventions to secure retention and success for first-year students (also see Jacobi 1991; Johnson 2002; McLean 2004; Heirdsfield *et al*. 2008). Through mentoring, higher education also endeavours to enhance the experiences of first-year students (Hall & Jaugietis 2011). Mentoring has clearly become one of the practices of choice in addressing first-year challenges and enhancing academic attainment (Abrahamson & Barter 2011; Smailes & Gannon-Leary 2011).

4.5 CHALLENGES OF TRANSITION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The aforementioned challenges can be categorised into two groups, namely academic and psychosocial. This categorisation reflects the Kram (1985) dichotomy of professional development and psychosocial support.

4.5.1 Academic challenges

The first academic issue that first-year university students experience involves time-management problems. This seems to be a major concern of first-year students (Budny *et al.* 2010; Gibney *et al.* 2011;) because most of them come from very structured programmes at high school and are confronted with what they perceive to be a great deal of free time at university. Budny *et al.* (2010:14) comment on this as follows:

> As a student moves from high school to college he/she is channelled through the high school's structured daily schedule of planned activities. Upon entering college, the same student is now largely in charge of creating and implementing his/her own schedule, a schedule that is typically different each day, and that leaves significant 'free time' between classes.

According to Budny *et al.* (2010); this creates time management problems for first-year students who, for the first time, are confronted with the task of having to set up their own time schedules for class attendance, studying, socialising and extracurricular activities. Gibney *et al.* (2011) argue that students' poor performance can be attributed, not to their spending time in paid employment, but much rather to their inability to grasp the nature of university learning and the notion of full-time study and its demands on autonomous studying and reading. The authors further note that time management skills are generally considered to be crucial to new university students.

Hurtado *et al.* (2007) report on the academic challenges that confront first-year students in their new academic environment. Students search for support, connections and information to help them cope academically. Gibney *et al.* (2011) conclude that first-year students are anxious about workloads, whether they will cope with the degree of difficulty of the academic work, and the financial implications if they did not like the course and made the wrong choice.

Peer mentors can act as primary support to assist first-year students in coping with these academic challenges. Grant-Vallone and Ensher (2000) point out that peer mentors, who were once in a similar situation, are closer in age to first-year students and are therefore easy to identify with. Peer mentors can also provide advice, information and support. Budny *et al.* (2010:9) state that "peer mentors take on essential roles in guiding students through the academic and personal challenges of the freshman year". Smailes and Gannon-Leary (2011) agree with this view and argue that peer mentoring is a tried and tested method that is used in higher education to facilitate student integration into higher education (also see Jacobi 1991; Ehrich *et al*. 2004; Crisp & Cruz 2009).

Mentors provide academic support to the mentees who then improve their performance and also increase their likelihood of persevering in their first year (Colvin & Ashman 2010). There tends to be a reduction in the drop-out rates, which benefits the universities (Leidenfrost *et al.* 2011).

4.5.2 Psychosocial challenges

Various authors have discussed the psycho-social challenges that first-year students encounter in the course of their transition to higher education. Budny *et al.* (2010) remark that, when a student comes to the university for the first time, the individual often feels like a stranger in an alien and possibly lonely environment. Treston (1999) describes this phenomenon as an isolation syndrome in which students find themselves in a social vacuum. This feeling of social isolation and anxiety can be addressed, according to Gibney *et al.* (2010), by the establishment of social networks which would facilitate social integration and develop friendships among the first-year students. Scutter *et al.* (2011) underscore the importance of friendships as a support structure that was found to be crucial to success and retention at first-year level in their research. Colvin and Ashman (2010) also point out that their research confirmed the importance of developing friendships as a

relational basis through which continual growth and development takes place. The authors state that, in their research, the mentees described their mentors as trusted friends. Hagemeyer *et al.* (2012) found that friendship is often rated second to couple relationships as the closest relationship people enter into. They argue that this closeness enables the provision of intimacy and social support that greatly contributes to the well-being of people. This sense of well-being and belonging is important for social integration. The value of this sense of intimacy is also underscored in the research of Colvin and Ashman (2010), who speak about the mentor as a trusted friend.

According to Colvin & Ashman 2010, this close relationship provides individual attention and a friend that is available to help the mentees when needed. Rosenthal and Shinebarger (2010) emphasise that the immediacy of the peer mentor, who is entrusted with the mentees' personal experiences, can help them to make use of the wider psychosocial support services at campus. The development of friendships assists first-year students in developing a sense of belonging and attachment to the institution (Chow & Healey 2008). These friendships also have the possibility of developing into life-long relationships (Penner 2001).

First-year students can also open up to peer mentors more easily because the latter are closer in age and are knowledgeable about the university environment and experience (Terrion & Leonard 2007; Mattanah *et al.* 2010). Mentors can therefore help mentees to understand, navigate and get connected to the campus environment and its culture (Terrion *et al.* 2007; Colvin & Ashman 2010; Gibney *et al.* 2010; Smailes & Gannon-Leary 2011).

The first-year students in the research reported on in this dissertation were accommodated in university residences. It was evident that these students were under greater pressure to adapt than those who resided off campus and had access to social networks. This agrees with Mattanah *et al.'s* (2010) finding that residential students indicated greater anxiety and fear than students who lived off campus.

4.6 CONCLUSION

It is common cause that students are the reason why universities exist, and that all the activities of the university essentially revolve around education, research, and the needs of students. It therefore follows that research in the field of higher education should include

research dealing with issues related to students' experiences and challenges at these institutions as a matter of course.

Mentoring has been discussed as an established and effective approach increasingly adapted by universities to address the challenges faced by both first-year students and universities. It is clear that mentoring has become an integral part of universities (Terrion & Leonard 2007; Scanlon 2009; Smailes & Gannon-Leary 2011) and therefore warrants research as belonging to the field of knowledge of higher education. As stated earlier, it is the responsibility of universities to address the challenges of transition, attrition and student success. This is related to the responsibilities that universities have to develop human resources to serve the public and produce new knowledge (Hurtado *et al.* 2007).

In the following chapter, I discuss the selected theories I utilised to assist with the sense-making of the data. This was undertaken as a response to the paucity in theoretically based research in higher education in general and mentoring in particular, as indicated earlier. In my study, I therefore attempted to engage with theoretical aspects and to build these into a theoretical framework for peer mentoring. This framework, which is presented in the next chapter, was applied to make sense of the data.

CHAPTER 5

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR PEER MENTORING

"… if mentoring research is to be taken seriously by researchers and practitioners alike, it is incumbent upon researchers to articulate the theoretical underpinnings of their empirical work."
(Erich, Hansford & Tennent 2001:3)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research conducted in response to the first aim articulated in Chapter 1, namely to develop a theoretical framework for peer-mentoring in higher education. Various social, psychological and educational theories were explored in order to extract relevant concepts or perspectives to inform such a theoretical framework. The research was also an attempt to address the paucity of theoretical mentoring and peer mentoring frameworks or theory as indicated in Chapter 1 of this study. This lacuna persists in spite of the burgeoning of mentoring research in general and peer-mentoring research in particular (Crisp & Cruz 2009). There is widespread concern about this paucity of theoretical underpinnings in mentoring research (Jacobi 1991; Hawkey 1997; Gibb 1999; Colley 2002; Rice 2006; Crisp & Cruz 2009)

Ehrich *et al*. (2001) examined more than 300 pieces of empirical research on mentoring in business and education to determine to what extent theoretical frameworks were being utilized in mentoring research. Drawing on the findings of their literature exploration, they proceeded to develop a general model for mentoring which appeared to be geared mainly towards business. However, it represented a significant step towards closing the gap between theory and practice.

Ehrich *et al.* (2001) concluded that their study confirmed the concerns of Jacobi (1991), Gibb (1999) and others, as articulated in the current study, namely that studies in mentoring frequently do not locate the concept within a broader theoretical framework. In particular, this was the situation with regard to education studies, where only 15% of the studies gave recognition to theories (Ehrich *et al.* 2001). It is therefore imperative to propose a tentative theoretical framework, such as the one suggested in this research, to underpin the research and data analysis. A study modelled on Broderick (1971) and

involving multiple strategy perspectives was adopted for the purposes of developing this framework.

5.2 MULTIPLE-PERSPECTIVE FRAMEWORK OF A DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Broderick (1971) critically examined five conceptual frameworks of family theory and concluded that new strategies were needed to address the then 'fractionated' nature of family theory. He suggested a systematic theory building strategy of using multiple perspectives and modern systems analysis to address the situation that family theory was in.

The strategy of using multiple perspectives was selected to form the basis of the theoretical mentoring framework development process. Two key sets of motivation informed this decision. The first source of motivation was the number of perspectives that emerged from the discussions of the literature explored in Chapters 2–4, namely; that mentoring is: complex, broad in application (different fields), and complicated (Ragins & Kram 2007; Eby *et al.* 2010); used inconsistently to describe a wide variety of relationships (Mertz 2004); a-theoretically researched (in many cases) (Bozeman & Feeney 2007; Crisp & Cruz 2009); and without a consistent definition in the context of higher education (Crisp & Cruz 2009).

The second source of motivation was the existing theories and frameworks, especially those mentioned in the literature on mentoring. Broderick (1971), however, points out that the strategy of multiple perspectives does not try to integrate frameworks and theories across the board. That would create inconsistencies as those theories derive from different philosophical and disciplinary origins. According to Broderick (1971:153), this strategy is much rather used to integrate these multiple perspectives "around more narrowly defined social processes like courtship or marital decision-making". In the case of this study, mentoring, and in particular the peer-mentoring dyad in higher education, was selected as that particular defined social process. Similar to courtship and marital decision-making, mentoring is also a dyadic unit. This strategy addresses each of the perspectives of the phenomenon under discussion— in this case the mentoring dyad. The reason why the phenomenon should be purposely restricted, according to Broderick (1971:153), is that "it should be possible to get a glimpse of the whole when the various perspectives are

summed up". Broderick (1971) also argues that, if the frameworks or theories are relevant and carefully selected, each should relate to some relevant aspects of the phenomenon under discussion. The articulation points of these frameworks should then contribute to the explanation of the phenomenon being researched.

Figure 5.1 depicts the multi-perspective framework-development process as adapted from Broderick (1971).

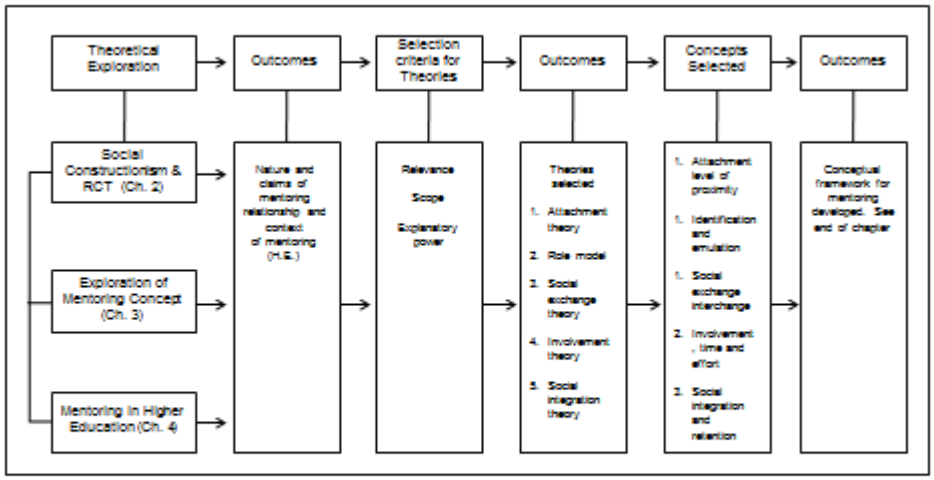

Figure 5.1: Multi-perspective theoretical peer-mentoring development framework process

(Source: Broderick 1971)

As indicated earlier, the source of the motivation to utilize the strategy depicted in Figure 5.1 is the number of perspectives that emerged from the discussions of the literature explored in Chapters 2–4. These chapters identified and discussed the nature, claims and contexts of mentoring. The outcomes were then used to select related theories of sufficient scope to assist in explaining these claims and characteristics of mentoring, especially in the context of dyads. Once the theories had been selected, the researcher identified concepts from these theories that were applicable to the research. These concepts were utilised to develop a theoretical framework for peer mentoring in higher education. In the development of my multiple-perspective approach, I followed Broderick's (1971) strategy

by not integrating any theories but abstracting the relevant perspectives (concepts) applicable to my study.

It must also be noted that the claims and characteristics of mentoring that were selected are those peculiar to mentoring dyads as they pertain to higher education and the transition from school to university.

These dyads are also contextualised in the broader social contexts of the mentoring programme, as well as in that of the institution of higher education. The theories selected are not exhaustive but represent those most applicable to the study as informed by the theoretical frameworks and the perspectives from the literature that emerged in Chapters 2–4. The three key frameworks are *relational theory*, *social constructionism* and the *philosophy of Ubuntu*. In terms of these, theories that operate in a relational and dyadic framework were first selected and those theories that explained social processes applicable to transition from school to higher education were selected next. The latter were approached as social processes that have an impact on and are driven from the dyadic experiences of the mentors and mentees. It must be reiterated that it was not the purpose of this study to explore all possible theories, but only those that seemed to contribute best to making sense of the data of the current study. Furthermore, concepts or elements were selected from these theories to develop into a theoretical framework to explain the peer dyadic experiences as generative sites of growth and transition.

5.3 THEORIES SELECTED

The following relationally framed theories were selected: attachment theory, role theory, social exchange theory, involvement theory and social integration theory. Along with Airhihenbuwa and Obregon (2000), who similarly assessed theories in their study to explore HIV/AIDS communication, it must be stated that these theories were applied in contexts for which they were not developed. It is therefore not primarily about the value of the selected theories but rather their explanatory power in the context of peer mentoring which is different from those contexts where these theories were initially developed and tested.

5.3.1 Attachment theory

Zand *et al.* (2009:14) reflect on mentoring as "relationship-based interventions [which] involve the development of attachment bonds as well as shared commitments to specific goals". These attachment bonds can be explored from the vantage point of attachment theory. Miles (2011) observes that attachment theory has been extended beyond parent-child bonds to describing close relationships between adults. Consequently, attachment as a theoretical framework can also be used to examine the main aspects of the relationship that peer mentors bring to mentoring. This is a position adopted in the current study.

Mentoring relationships are also complex (Gormley 2008), close and interdependent (Devins & Gold 2002; Neuman 2003; Ragins & Verbos 2007; Comstock *et al.* 2008; Gormley 2008). This is perhaps why Wang *et al.* (2009) posit that attachment theory is well suited to studying relationships with these characteristics and thus relevant to the study of mentoring. This closeness is enhanced by trust, which is a prominent feature of a secure attachment style (Berscheid & Reis 1998). Trust is also consistently mentioned as being crucial to the mentoring relationship (Colvin & Ashman 2010).

The first notion that is applicable to this study, namely attachment, was deemed essential to mentoring dyads in this study. Initially the mentee attaches him- or herself to the mentor with the expectation of support and guidance (Kram 1985). Both Wang *et al.* (2009) and Gormley (2008) point out that mentors have been referred to as attachment figures such as parental figures. These figures provide a safe haven and secure base as propounded in attachment theory and the literature on mentoring (see Chapters 4 and 5). The peer mentoring dyad, as seen in this study, becomes that safe and secure environment within which the attachment takes place and the relationship develops.

The second concept that was used from this theory was that of attachment style as determined by its level of proximity (closeness) or distance (avoidance) (Bretherton 1992). The attachment styles that were utilised in this study are broadly referred to as secure attachment (seeking attachment) and insecure attachment (avoiding attachment). In this study, attachment theory has not been applied in its finer nuances; only the above-mentioned two concepts from the attachment theory as relevant to the analysis of peer mentoring dyads were used.

5.3.2 Social exchange theory

In 1958, Homans proposed social behaviour as a form of exchange. He argued that it was one of the oldest social theories and that it explained human interaction in general and in small groups. Homans (1958) noted that, at the time, there was as yet no two-person interaction (in research context) that would confirm his propositions. Thus he drew on studies on economics to explain this theory. Homans (1958:606) concluded his exposition of exchange theory with the following statement:

> Social behaviour is an exchange of goods, material goods but also non-material ones, such as the symbols of approval or prestige. Persons that give much to others try to get much from them, and persons that get much from others are under pressure to give much to them.

This theory, as can be seen above, assumes that self-interest motivates the actions of people in relationships. It also implies that the gains are determined by how much a person gives. Therefore, according to this view, reciprocal cooperation is crucial to the preservation of a mutually beneficial relationship. Three elements of mentoring that are present in his theory are relationality, mutuality and reciprocity.

Ensher, Thomas and Murphy (2001) applied exchange theory as a conceptual framework for mentoring in a business context. They posited that relationships are sustained or terminated based on the perceived ratio of benefits to costs in the interaction. They proposed role modelling, social and vocational support as the currencies between mentor and mentee. Their study had a one-sided focus, namely only the mentee perspective. The current study holds a dyadic perspective, involving both mentors and mentees. Ensher *et al.* (2001) point out that reciprocity is an important aspect of satisfaction in dyadic relationships. It is the norm that determines the giving and receiving of benefits in a dyadic relationship. The experience and perception of reciprocity in the relationship contributes to the levels of satisfaction of the dyadic partners. Ensher *et al.* (2001), concurring with Kram and Isabella (1985), state that in peer mentoring dyads both partners take turns in giving and receiving as peer relationships offer a uniqueness that enables turn-taking as givers and receivers.

In my study, I adopted the notion of mutual exchange as informed by the norm of reciprocity. The concept of exchange was extended to include social interchange to capture

the position taken in the current study, namely that both members of the dyad share interdependence and are co-beneficiaries of their relationship. This social exchange-interchange concept is also relationally framed and is based on the assumption of dyadic partner interest as opposed to self-interest. These concepts from social exchange theory offer yet another lens through which to view the dyadic peer- mentoring relationship.

5.3.3 Role-model theory

There is agreement in the literature on the importance of mentors as role models in socialising and developing mentees (Welsh & Wanberg 2009). Role modelling requires mentors that are higher in rank (Allen, Eby & Lentz 2006) and more advanced, skilled and knowledgeable (Kram 1985) than the mentee. Allen *et al*. (2006) argue that their mentors are in a better position to act as role models for mentees to emulate as the mentors enjoy greater admiration and success.

Allen *et al.* (2006) contend that mentees are more likely to follow role models closer to their own rank. This makes it easier for mentees to identify with mentors as one can argue that they are closer to reaching the goal of emulation. Kram (1985) suggests that identification is a prerequisite for role modelling to be effected. The relationship becomes one of possibility as a result of this proximity and identification.

Role modelling, as an interactive process, is adapted as an approach to contribute towards making sense of the data. The dyadic relationship is the social space within which the roles of role model and emulator are played out. In my study, I also assumed that, as both parties develop and the mentees become more confident, there might be instances of role switching. Mentors become, or can be deemed to be, change agents through modelling pro-social behaviour to mentees. These mentees then emulate the mentors and extend their own roles in the context of the relationship and consequently the broader university context.

5.3.4 Involvement theory

The student involvement theory developed by Astin (1999) can be applied to explain environmental influences on student development. It presents itself as an uncomplicated theory that explains student involvement as the amount of both physical and psychological energy spent on the academic experience (Astin 1999). This involvement is understood to include a broad array of involvements ranging from pure academic work to involvement

with extra-curricular programmes, work study projects and other university or college programmes. The theory also refers to involvement with a wide range of people, from teaching staff to administrators and fellow students. Astin states that involvement indicates a behavioural component but he accepts that there is a motivational aspect as well. Astin presents five postulates, but for the purpose of this research, only two were drawn upon. The first is that "the extent to which students can achieve particular developmental goals is a direct function of time and effort they devote to activities designed to produce these gains" (Astin 1999:522). The author also ascribes to involvement theory the more than average changes in the characteristics of freshmen (first-year students). The second is that the higher the degree of student involvement, the lesser the chance of their dropping out (Astin 1999).

Peer mentoring is an activity that is employed to get students to adapt to the higher education environment in order to gain both psychosocial and academic support. Langer (2010) points out that for mentoring programmes to be effective, mentors and mentees need to remain highly engaged. He also claims that this kind of involvement will reduce the number of mentees who do not complete their studies or, to use Astin's (1999) terminology, who will drop out. Astin raises the issue of the student's locus of control and argues that the level of, and increase in, involvement are determined by the student's perception of his or her locus of control. Langer (2010) states that, in the mentoring context, both the mentor and the mentee share the responsibility for the success of the mentorship. Langer (2010) also points out that the mentee should realise his or her own potential and should be open to feedback. The current study supports these notions of shared responsibility, power sharing and involvement as indicators of mentorship success in terms of student learning and personal development.

5.3.5 Social integration theory

Both Jacobi (1991) and Hall and Jaugietis (2011) claim that the social integration approach of Tinto (1975) is appropriate for peer mentoring in higher education. The model "argues that it is the individual's integration into the academic and social systems of the college that most directly relates to his [or her] continuance in that college [higher education]". Tinto argues that it is the person's integration at both academic and social level that determines the level of commitment. Therefore, the higher the degree of commitment to the goal of completing the qualifications, the smaller the possibility that the student will drop out.

Tinto (1975) makes the point that the student's interaction with the environment (both academic and social) is crucial to his or her chance of completing the course. The student's peers as part of the social system are critically important for the process of integration to take place via friendship support (Tinto 1975). The author posits that social integration into college (higher education), with particular reference to persistence to stay, does not imply complete congruence with the prevailing institutional climate, but much rather sufficient congruency with the social climate facilitated through friendship associations. Integration, especially on the social level, creates a feeling of belonging which Tinto (1975) refers to as "social fit". The author uses the theory to develop a model with which to predict and explain student attrition.

The notion of social integration at both academic and social level as crucial to student success was adopted in the current study on peer mentoring. This process is par excellence the social and academic programme that can assist a student to adapt to the culture of higher education, as argued earlier in the current study. It helps students to effect the transition to higher education and introduces them to university life, both academic and social. The mentoring dyad is the first vehicle of transition and receiver of the student into the higher education culture. The fuller induction into university life is facilitated through mentoring, and the current study proposes mentoring as a model for dropping in as opposed to dropping out.

5.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR PEER MENTORING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In line with Broderick (1971), the concepts or elements discussed above were taken from the five theories selected. These concepts or elements were aligned with the perspectives discussed in Chapters 2–4. The selection was also informed by the appropriateness of the theories and their support by the literature on mentoring in higher education. The selection is by no means exhaustive and is merely an initial attempt at proposing a theory for the development of a theoretical framework for peer mentoring for the purposes of the current study and future consideration.

It seemed appropriate to introduce the theoretical model for peer mentoring at this point as the literature perspectives and theories discussed in this chapter had all been dealt with. Therefore the development of the theoretical framework seemed to be an appropriate point

of connection to draw Chapters 2–5 to a close before commencing with the sections that deal with the more practical and empirical issues.

The theoretical framework for peer mentoring dyads in higher education was distilled from the literature consulted throughout my study, the theories discussed in this chapter, the themes that emerged from the data, and the broader theoretical frameworks informing the study.

The primary focus is the dyadic lived experience of the peer mentor and mentee. From this central focus the themes emerged, placed on the sides and at the top of the diagram in Figure 5.2. At the base are the dyadic contextual realities in which the dyad is embedded. Each of the themes represents a particular perspective of the dyadic lived experience; for example, the theme 'inter-relationship' expresses finding the self in the other. This is a reciprocal and interconnected relationship and as the mentee finds him- or herself in the peer mentor the inverse also occurs. This phenomenon is supported both in the literature (Jordan 1989) and by the data (see Chapters 7 and 8). A third layer is the theories or the elements thereof (the current chapter) that were added for their explanatory power. Therefore, strong connections are created between the phenomenon (the peer-mentoring dyad, which is the unit of analysis), the data and the broader theoretical frameworks (social constructionism and relational theory) that created the conceptual space for this framework.

In applying the theory, one should proceed from the vantage point of the centre, namely the lived experience of the dyadic partners. This acts as the hub and keeps the themes together. The themes are interrelated, but for the purpose of making sense of all the data, this theoretical framework served to untangle the experiences of the dyadic partners and to reduce the 'glare' in the data. The different theories or aspects therefore acted like Polaroid lenses that assisted the researcher's eye in eliminating the diffuse glare created by all the data. In the monadic analysis, the researcher switched positions between the mentor and mentee texts in observing their experiences set as themes through these lenses. In the dyadic analysis, the challenge was to hold the dyad together and apply the framework, which had a polarizing effect on the interaction between the mentor and mentee. The theoretical framework was very helpful in this regard, and the theoretical framework for peer mentoring dyads in higher education was used in conjunction with the dyadic analysis

approach, adapted from Eisikovits and Koren (2010). Figure 5.2 represents the theoretical framework for peer mentoring dyads in higher education.

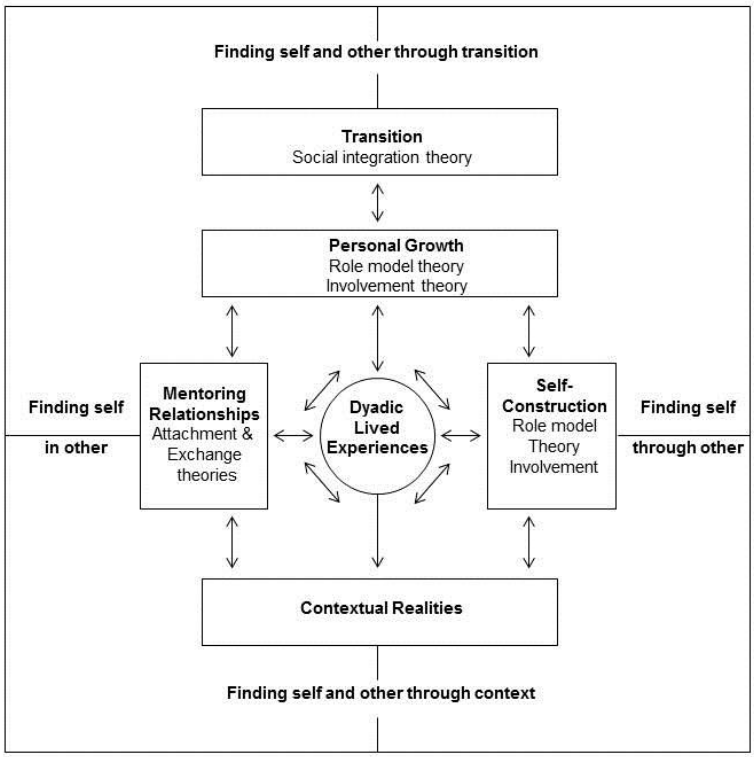

Figure 5.2: Theoretical framework for peer mentoring dyads in higher education

The theoretical framework for peer mentoring dyads in higher education is an attempt at theoretically connecting the various aspects of the current study. This includes perspectives from the literature, theoretical perspectives, methodological perspectives from the literature, such as the dyad as a unit of analysis, and keeping it together theoretically framed by social constructionism and relational theory, which provide the broad overarching vantage points. Finally, this framework for peer mentoring is utilised in Chapters 7 and 8 and serves as a natural and conceptual link between the current and subsequent chapters.

5.5 CONCLUSION

I adapted an approach used by Broderick (1971) to select the theories and aspects thereof that were pertinent to my study. I also forged links between these theories and aspects of mentoring that I explored in Chapters 2 and 3. This chapter has culminated in the development of a theoretical framework for peer mentoring in higher education (TF-PM).

Finally, I applied this framework in the analysis of the data. The research methodology for the empirical part of the study is outlined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

> "Our constructions of the world, our values, and our ideas about how to inquire into those constructions, are mutually reinforcing. We conduct inquiry via a particular paradigm because it embodies assumptions about the world that we believe and values that we hold, and because we hold those assumptions and values we conduct inquiry according to the precepts of that paradigm."
>
> (Schwandt 1989:399)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The research underpinning the discussions in this chapter was intended as both a practical response to the research problem as set out in Chapter 1 and a theoretical response to the framework and lenses set out in Chapter 2. The epistemological assumptions supporting my study were discussed in Chapter 2. These assumptions were embedded in a social constructionist framework, which I utilized as one of the theoretical frames for my study. I adopted case study research (CSR) in order to conduct the research in concert with these assumptions. This chapter describes my research approach, the basic research design, and the research methods followed in the empirical part of this study.

6.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The purpose of my research was to explore the potential reciprocal growth of undergraduate peer-mentoring relationships in the context of a formal peer-mentoring programme at a university residence from a dyadic relational perspective. An interpretive approach was selected because it was appropriate to the purpose of this research and made it possible for me to make better sense of the constructions of the world and relationships of the mentor-mentee dyads both in their natural setting and in the process of transition to higher education (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit 2004; Glesne 2006; Babbie & Mouton 2009). Finally, the approach was deemed compatible with the theoretical frameworks or lenses: social constructionism, relational theory, principles of Ubuntu and social theory as described in Chapter 5.

A qualitative stance, or the use of qualitative data in the empirical work, characteristically views participants from their perspective (Patton 2002; Glesne 2006; Babbie & Mouton

2009). In this way, it adopts an emic perspective that creates the space to give 'voice' to the participants. I therefore chose to conduct a multi-vocal research inquiry in accordance with Schwandt (1989) (see the quotation that prefaces this chapter). However, my selection of an interpretive approach did not depend solely on what was practically appropriate but also on what was philosophically and theoretically congruent.

Glesne (2006:4–5) states that researchers using qualitative data focus on making sense of how participants in a particular social setting construct the world around them. My study focused on the dyad as the particular social setting embedded in the peer-mentoring programme. I sought to understand and interpret the manner in which the participants constructed their dyadic and surrounding relational world. Neuman (2003) and Kvale (2009) remark that social interaction is meaningful, and I consequently posited that dyadic interaction and thus meaning-making were meaningful and open to meaningful interpretation. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) argue that because participants in social interaction seek meaning, the utilization of a qualitative approach as the investigation of the quality of relationships, activities or situations is appropriate. The relational aspect is at the core of the current research.

The assumptions that underpinned the abovementioned views in my research were the following:

- Reality is socially constructed (Glesne 2006) by the individuals involved in the research situation (Fraenkel & Wallen 2006).
- The 'social actors' interact in a meaningful way (Fraenkel & Wallen 2006; Kvale 2009).
- It is impossible for the researcher to stand apart from the individuals he or she is studying (Fraenkel & Wallen 2006).
- The purpose of educational research is to understand what things mean to others. Highly generalizable 'laws', as such, can never be found.

The theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapter 5 incorporated these assumptions. This created coherence between the research approach and the research framework applied in my study. This internal coherence, which contributed to the rigour of the research, prepared a good theoretical context for the analysis of the data. Mouton (1996:36–37)

states that "methodological paradigms ... include certain assumptions and values regarding their use under specific circumstances. At this level we encounter both the actual methods and techniques and the underlying philosophy underpinning them". It is imperative to select the research design in line with the key assumptions of the approach chosen. The following section addresses the selection of an appropriate research design.

6.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design must not only be congruent with the research approach, but must also be able to generate the most appropriate (i.e. critical) evidence in addressing the research question. Mouton (2010) emphasises that the research design encapsulates the logic of the study. He points out different types of research logic.

6.3.1 Logic of research

Mouton (2010) posits three types of logic to consider when deciding on a research design:

- Logic of contextualization vs. logic of generalization;
- Logic of discovery vs. logic of validation;
- Logic of diachronic vs. logic of synchronic studies.

The first part of the discussion on the research design is an application of the above-mentioned modes of reasoning (the ‘logics’ of research) to the research problem. This I performed in two steps. First, the unit of analysis was identified and examined in terms of these modes of reasoning. The critical questions were then subjected to the same process. The second part is a discussion and motivation of CSR as the design selected for this study. It is important to restate the research question in order to contextualize these discussions.

6.3.2 The research problem

As previously stated, the purpose of my research was to explore the potential reciprocal growth in undergraduate peer-mentoring relationships in the context of a formal peer-mentoring programme at a university residence from a dyadic relational perspective.The research attempted to answer the following question: How do undergraduate peer-mentoring relationships in the context of a residentially based undergraduate peer-mentoring programme contribute to the reciprocal growth of the dyadic partners?

6.3.3 Unit of analysis

The basic unit of analysis was the peer-mentoring dyad, which was studied to develop an in-depth understanding of peer mentoring as an interpersonal phenomenon and the transition of the mentee from school to higher education in the context of this relationship. The unit of analysis was not representative of a large group and the findings were not being used for broad generalisations as in the case of large surveys. The primary interest of my research was to develop a better understanding of the role of peer mentoring in the dyadic context. Karney *et al.* (2010) state that behaviour in relationships can be individually and jointly determined as the partners influence each other. I therefore conducted both monadic and dyadic analyses of the data to develop a better dyadic understanding of peer mentoring (see Chapters 7 & 8).

Wittenborn *et al.* (2013) posit that dyadic approaches enable researchers to explore concepts such as *mutuality* and *reciprocity*, as well as interactional processes in relational contexts, and that such approaches assist them in developing a deeper understanding of the interpersonal context. I therefore selected the dyadic approach as it not only recognises both partners in a peer-mentoring relationship, but also the relationship as the conduit through which interaction and mutual influences flow. The first mode of reasoning that informed the study was therefore the logic of contextualization.

One of the aims of the study was to contribute to a better understanding of the peer-mentoring relationship and how it assists in easing the transition from high school to higher education. Retroductive inferencing was applied to generate plausible explanations for the findings—thus, the mode of reasoning I followed was that of discovery and not of validation.

6.3.4 Subsidiary questions

The following subsidiary questions guided my research:

- What are the key components of peer mentoring?
- How do undergraduate peer-mentoring partners construct themselves and their roles in a peer-mentoring dyad in the context of a residentially based peer-mentoring programme in higher education?

- How are ‘reciprocity’ and ‘equality’ manifested in undergraduate peer-mentoring dyads in the context of a residentially based peer-mentoring programme in higher education?

All these questions are embedded in the dyad and, ultimately, in the peer-mentoring programme. My research was mainly an in-depth study of the dyads; therefore, the logic of contextualization was applied in this study. The dyads are not representative of dyads elsewhere to the extent that generalisations can be drawn from the findings, which was also the aim of my research. My intention was to describe and understand human behaviour (dyads) (Babbie & Mouton 2009).

As I used diachronic logic, the dyad was not continuously studied over any extended period of time. Even so, my prolonged engagement with the dyads afforded me the opportunity to develop trust, insight and adequate representations of the voices of the dyadic participants (Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2007).

The question that needed to be answered was the following: Which research design best fits the above modes of reasoning or logic in order to address the research question? Case study research (CSR) was selected as the most appropriate research design. This design is discussed in the following section.

6.3.5 Case study design

Babbie (2013) states that a case study captures a single instance of a social phenomenon. In an article in which he discusses the use of the case study in social inquiry, Stake (1978) asserts that it is a widely held belief that case studies are appropriate in the study of human affairs. Stake (1978) argues that such studies are particularly suited to add to 'humanistic' experience and understanding. The questions of mentoring and transition from school to higher education are *par excellence* 'humanistic' by their very nature and constitute a particular instance of a social phenomenon (Rule & John 2011). Even at this early point in the discussion, the case study design presents itself as a design of choice.

In terms of congruency, Neuman (2003) comments that most case studies involve qualitative data and that virtually all qualitative approaches use in-depth and detailed knowledge to construct representations. Case studies can thus be utilized in a qualitative

approach (Eisenhardt 1989; Miles & Huberman 2002; Yin 2009). The case study design seemed to be an appropriate design to utilize in my study.

6.3.6 Case study research as design of choice

Different terms are used in the literature to refer to the case study. Denscombe (2011) uses the terms 'case study', 'case study approach' and 'case study as a strategy' interchangeably. The term 'case study' seems to have been used by the earlier writers (Stake 1978; Yin 1994; Merriam 2002) and most recently also by Creswell (2009) and occasionally by Simons (2009). The latter researcher also uses the term 'case study design', a practice followed by Andrade (2009). The term 'case study research' (CSR) was introduced by Woodside (2010). I prefer to use this term and refer to 'case study' as a strategy for the purposes of my own research. The term ‘case study research’ seems to be more descriptive, and in line with the notions of my research design. It also avoids the potential confusion inherent in the terms 'case study' and 'case' as denoting two distinct concepts.

As a research strategy, CSR has characteristics that made it an appropriate approach for my study. Firstly, CSR focuses on a singular phenomenon (Rule & John 2011) in a real-life or natural setting (Stake 1978; Yin 1981; Tellis 1997; Van Wynsberghe & Khan 2007; Simons 2009; Woodside, 2010). My study focused on a singular phenomenon, a peer mentoring dyad, located in a specific real-life context, a formal mentoring programme located in a first-year hostel at an institution of higher learning. I focused on how the peer mentoring dyad facilitated learners' transition from high school to higher education and how the dyadic relationship contributed to the growth and development of both mentors and mentees.

Secondly, I took the strategic decision to conduct an in-depth relational study of peer-mentoring dyads. CSR was particularly well-suited to my study because CSR has the development of deep understanding as its principal objective (Woodside 2010; Day-Ashley 2013). CSR also creates the possibility to develop a unique insightful understanding, greater detail and depth (Denscombe 2011; Day-Ashley 2013; Taber 2013). CSR provides the space to explore complex phenomena from a holistic perspective (Eisenhardt 1989; Merriam 2002; Patton 2002; Andrade 2009; Edwards & Skinner 2009; Denscombe 2011). Essentially, case studies are about the complexities of real-life situations (Thomas 2011) and about facilitating the development of new insights, perspectives and interpretations of

these complex situations (Van Wynsberghe & Khan 2007). Mentoring is a complex human phenomenon (Crawford *et al.* 2013) and, in order to develop a deep understanding, it is important to utilise a holistic approach. Stake (1978; 2005) argues that CSR is particularly studied to explore human experiences. Denscombe (2011) points out that CSR does not only deal with the phenomenon as a whole but also regards the particular working of relationships and social processes as being crucial. Peer mentoring is such a human process and I attempted in this study to give voice to the research participants. The comments and explorations given by the research participants constituted the emic report that is represented in the transcriptions of the interviews through which they voiced their understandings and experiences of the phenomenon under study.

Because CSR deals with a case study as a whole and goes into detail (Denscombe 2011), it becomes possible to explore the relationships between the processes and relationships under discussion. This particular feature of CSR worked well for my study as I explored peer mentoring as it manifested itself in the context of a dyadic relationship. I also explored the process of transition from school to higher education, and CSR proved to be an appropriate strategy to follow. My sense-making of the role of peer mentoring in this process and the dyadic experiences presented by the research participants constituted an etic representation of reality (Woodside 2010) which included description and explanation of emic meaning (Yin 2009; Woodside 2010).

I used an instrumental, interpretive and exploratory type of CSR design (Merriam 2002; Stake 2005; Edwards & Skinner 2009; Yin 2009). My study was instrumental because I focused on a specific phenomenon in the case (peer-mentoring dyad), namely the peer-mentoring relationship, in order to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. I attempted not only to describe the phenomenon but also to advance an explanation and analysis of the phenomenon. I adopted a multiple-case study design to gain a broader understanding. This was not done to follow a sampling logic but merely to gain a deeper understanding and explanation of my study (Andrade 2009).

I prefer the term 'collective case study' (Stake 2005) to 'multiple-case study' as it more aptly captures the interpretivist epistemology I adopted as opposed to a more positivist epistemology. It was also important for me to foreground interpretivism as it is underpinned by the assumption that reality, in this case the peer-mentoring relationship reality, is a social construct invoking the experiences and interactions of groups and

individuals of their reality (Van Wynsberghe & Khan 2007) and that this reality is explored and explained by the researcher (Andrade 2009). The concept ‘case study’ is thus congruent with the interpretivist paradigm (Van Wynsberghe & Khan 2007) I selected in my study, and with CSR as an appropriate research design. I thus selected CSR as my design of choice because it can, from an interpretive-constructionist perspective, unlock sufficient data from the cases selected, not only for analysis (Miles & Huberman 2002), but also to develop a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study.

I conclude this section with a brief reflection on the term 'case' as opposed to 'case study' and link it to my unit of analysis. Simons (2009) points out that a case is bounded. This is a description supported by researchers in the field of CSR (Stake 2005; Creswell 2009).

According to Woodside (2010), cases are bounded in terms of spatial, temporal, personal, organisational and other factors. Edwards and Skinner (2009) explain that, as a bounded system, a case has a very specific focus of investigation such as an event, process and institution. I would like to add, as in the case of my study, a peer-mentoring dyad. Denscombe (2011) emphasises that a case is located in a natural setting—in my research, an institution of higher learning. Yin (1981; 2009) defines a case as a phenomenon that occurs naturally and exists prior to and, it is hoped, beyond the conclusion of the study. Denscombe (2011) agrees with this definition. Edwards and Skinner (2009) contend that the researcher needs to select or identify the unit of analysis in order to define the case. I identified the peer-mentoring dyad as the unit of analysis of my study.

6.4 RESEARCH RIGOUR

There are a variety of approaches to the question of what constitutes reliability and validity, to use terminology from an interpretive approach, in the context of using qualitative data. At the one extreme, there is the view that the quantitative terminology should be retained with the application of verification strategies to be applied formatively (Morse *et al.* 2002). These researchers, Morse *et al.* (2002:13) also argue that the responsibility for ensuring rigour should rest with the investigator (researcher) and not be left until the end for the "reader or consumer of the qualitative inquiry" to decide. At the other extreme, there is the argument that, because of the ontological and epistemological differences between the qualitative and quantitative approaches, it is not possible to 'transplant' concepts from one approach to the other in a conceptually coherent and

effective manner. Golafshani (2003:599–606) points out that "the concepts of reliability and validity are viewed differently by researchers who strongly consider these concepts defined in quantitative terms as inadequate". Irrespective of the view of the authors in respect of their position on the Morse *et al.*–Golafshani spectrum, there is common agreement that in both qualitative and quantitative approaches researchers need to demonstrate that the reader can take their research seriously and that it is credible (Creswell & Miller 2000; Whittemore, Chase & Mandle 2001; Patton 2002; De Vos *et al.*, 2005). This leaves one with the goal expressed by Merriam *et al.* (2002:22):

> All researchers aspire to produce valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner. And both producers and consumers of research want to be assured that the findings of an investigation are to be believed and trusted.

I aspired to the goal expressed by Merriam *et al.* (2002) above, namely to explore and consider ways in a qualitative approach that would ensure rigour in the conduct of my study.

Stake (2005) remarks that information gained in an inquiry, research report or project faces a hazardous journey from the author to the reader. As the author, I needed to find ways of safeguarding that trip. I was also the primary instrument for the generation of this inquiry and had to make the passage less hazardous and more rigorous to instil confidence in the information generated. I considered various criteria and techniques in this process, as discussed below.

6.4.1 Criteria and techniques

In their approach to validity criteria in a qualitative approach, Whittemore *et al.* (2001) draw a distinction between *criteria* and *techniques*. They explain criteria as a set of standards to apply and techniques as methods to employ to increase validity. They argue that different research designs and interpretive perspectives may need to select those standards applicable to the particular research. The authors continue to divide the criteria into primary and secondary criteria after carrying out an in-depth investigation into the debates and development on validity in qualitative approaches to research. Although they argue that validity "is an accurate term and does provide the opportunity for criteria to be developed that are reflective of the tenets of the interpretive perspective" (572), they adopt the terminology developed to secure rigour in a qualitative paradigm. They then develop a

triarchic model consisting of primary criteria, secondary criteria, and techniques (referred to as the 'standards').

Table 6.1 is an adaptation of the Whittemore *et al.* (2001:530) model. In response to their plea for flexibility in the application of these standards, I selected those pertinent to my study.

Table 6.1: Contemporary synthesis of validity criteria in qualitative research

Primary criteria	• Credibility • Authenticity • Criticality • Integrity
Secondary criteria	• Explicitness • Congruence • Sensitivity
Techniques	• Performing literature review • Triangulation • Reflexivity • Nature of transcription • Prolonged engagement • Saturation

(Adapted from Whittemore *et al*. 2001:530)

6.4.1.1 Primary criteria

6.4.1.1.1 Credibility

Babbie and Mouton (2009:277) posit that credibility is attained when there is compatibility between the realities as lived and constructed by the respondents and the interpretations and claims made by the researcher based on the data gathered.

De Vos *et al.* (2005:346) argue that an in-depth description which shows the complexities of interactions that are richly embedded with data extracted from the context tends to be valid. It follows that the context must not only be adequately defined but must have clear boundaries. The participants must also be defined and placed in the delineated setting, and the research results should reflect the experiences of these participants in a credible way (also see Lincoln & Guba 1994).

Abma and Stake (2014) posit that findings have to be credible and that claims have to be true to the meanings generated in the case and should therefore not be dominated by the researcher's voice. This is a point made much earlier by Whittemore *et al.* (2001), namely that interpretations should not only be trustworthy but should also reveal some 'truth' that is corroborated in a way that is external to the investigator's personal experience. This requires that the voices of the participants be heard independently of that of the researcher, which will raise the credibility of the interpretations. In my study, the voices of the research participants were raised both in the monadic and the dyadic analyses (Chapters 7 and 8). I engaged with both mentor and mentee voices (transcripts) and with the interaction between them by also approaching the analysis from a dyadic relational stance. The voices of the participants were thus heard individually as well as in relation to each other.

6.4.1.1.2 Authenticity

Neuman (2003:185) argues that the principle of authenticity (genuineness) requires fairness, honesty and balance in reporting on the lived experiences of participants and trying to capture their perspective in the act of reporting. This echoes the notion advanced by Whittemore *et al.* (2001). According to Neuman (2003), the interpretive perspective is multi-vocal and the authenticity of the person, phenomenon or situation is an important criterion for validity. The mentors and mentees in my study were authentic, as was the context of the dyad as set in a formal institutional peer- mentoring programme.

Student engagement in general, and mentoring in particular, has increased significantly at higher education institutions (Power *et al.* 2011). This increased interest in mentoring as an intervention (Rekha & Ganesh 2012) contributes to its authenticity. Peer mentoring is established as authentic in the higher education context and peers seem to prefer peers as mentors (Beltman & Schaeben 2012), thus undergirding the authenticity of peer mentoring in my study.

6.4.1.1.3 Criticality

Abma and Stake (2014) point out that, the researcher acts as an instrument when interacting with the case study to collect and give meaning to the data and experiences. The influence of the researcher as the collector and interpreter of the data could therefore be decisive and significantly affect the integrity of the research. Whittemore *et al.* (2001:531) also caution that the background, assumptions and particular interpretations of

the researcher have the potential to influence the research. The etic voice of the researcher needs to be amplified and give legitimacy to the emic poly-vocality that lies at the heart of qualitative data as well as in CSR (as was the case in my study). I had to answer the question as to whose case was being heard, through whose voice, and whether there was an open-minded enquiry not dominated by my own issues and concerns (Abma & Stake 2014). The challenge was to bracket my own views as I searched for the interpretations and views of the participants. I triangulated the monadic and dyadic texts to foreground the participants' voices to let the data "speak" for itself in order to allow me to be led by the data in the presentation, analysis, and interpretation processes (Chapters 7 and 8).

6.4.1.1.4 Integrity

I was very closely involved in the research process, and this proximity posed risks for integrity, which is essential in critical reflection on and in the analysis of qualitative research (Whittemore *et al.* 2001:531). I developed a theoretical framework for peer mentoring (TF-PM, see Chapter 5) in higher education to keep the interpretation grounded in the data as far as possible, and to improve the integrity of the research process and the validity of the data (Whittemore *et al.* 2001). My commitment to the principle of integrity should be obvious from the clear and well substantiated presentation of Chapters 7 and 8 of this dissertation (see Whittemore *et al.* 2001).

6.4.1.2 Secondary criteria

6.4.1.2.1 Explicitness

Patton (2002:562) and Merriam *et al.* (2002) highlight the importance of explicitness in terms of data collection, analysis and the manner in which categories are derived and decisions made throughout the inquiry. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002) note that there is the question of practicality and that one could add sensibility. The reader should have a sense of the interpretive lens that was used in the analysis, as well as of the process that was followed in the research journey (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 2002:427). I conducted my study as explicitly and in as practical a manner as possible. Data collection, analysis and presentation were dealt with in a transparent and direct manner, as is evident from my descriptions of the various processes and motivation for the decisions taken in my study.

6.4.1.2.2 Congruence

The formal understanding of the concept 'congruence' is that which 'fits together well' (Longman Exams Dictionary 2006). Whittemore *et al.* (2001:532) refer to congruence between "the research question, the method, and the findings; between data collection and analysis; between the current study and previous studies, and between the findings and practice". I addressed some of these issues in the course of my research and elaborated on them earlier in this chapter (research design, case selection, and data analysis). The issue that needs to be commented on briefly is that of congruity between this particular study and previous studies. The level of congruity has been discussed in Chapters 2, 5, 7 and 8 (that is, in the literature perspectives, and picked up again in the interpretation of the data and development and identification of themes in the analysis). In the final chapter (Chapter 9), I critique my study in terms of its compliance with the requirements of dyadic research.

6.4.1.2.3 Sensitivity

Sensitivity, according to Whittemore *et al.* (2001), is an important criterion for validity when utilising qualitative data with two primary perspectives: that is, a human and a research-process perspective. In terms of the human perspective, there is sensitivity to the individual as well as to the collective or community. According to the authors, sensitivity to these aspects of the research raises the validity of the research. Respect for and recognition of the dignity of participants are two key issues in the research process. This speaks to the relationship the researcher establishes with the participants. This relationship is not only crucial to the quality of the data that the participants provide, but also to the manner in which the researcher engages with, makes sense of, and presents the data. I endeavoured to treat the participants with dignity at all times and respected their personal spaces and times of availability. There was also an awareness of the importance of the voice of the participants, as discussed earlier and their right to withdraw at any stage.

In terms of the research-process perspective, there was the challenge to negotiate meaning with the participants via the data gathered, without the researcher losing his or her own voice and at the same time not drowning out or disowning the participants' voices. An additional challenge within the social constructionist framework selected for this research was the recognition of multiple realities. This challenged me to remain faithful to the data as I negotiated meaning through all the participant voices in a respectful and dignified

treatment of the data. Chapters 7 and 8 present my interpretations and discussion of the data.

The criteria, both primary and secondary, were selected in line with my research project. Authors such as Rolfe (2006) argue that no generic list of criteria for assessing a study using qualitative data is possible and that what is required is a 'continuum of criteria'. Nelson (2008:319) points out that this view is shared by a number of authors and that the view propounded by them is that "factors such as philosophical underpinning, perspective, purpose, and expected outcome when considering the appropriateness of criteria used to assess rigor" be applied in selecting criteria. This was the approach I adopted in the selection of the above criteria (an approach also supported by Patton 2002).

These criteria are referred to as 'standards' and the challenge is for researchers using qualitative data to demonstrate that their research is credible (believable). The process to demonstrate credibility requires certain procedures (Creswell & Miller 2000), verification strategies (Morse *et al.* 2002), testing (Golafshani 2003), common research techniques (Lincoln & Guba 2005), or simply techniques (Whittemore *et al.* 2001).

In the following subsection, I report on some of the techniques applied to enhance the validity or trustworthiness of my research. The techniques discussed were those selected in line with the factors identified by Nelson (2008:319) and deemed appropriate to this study.

6.4.1.3 Techniques

6.4.1.3.1 Generating literature perspectives

I elected to explore the literature concurrently with the data collection process and analysis. This created a creative interplay between the processes of developing perspectives from the literature, and collecting and analysing the data (Patton 2002). This process also facilitated the internal coherence and links developed in my study. A further implication was that my literature exploration would not be complete until the data analysis process had been concluded. I extended the literature exploration to inform, support and validate (Marshall & Rossman 1999:52) my eventual interpretations. This approach of "incorporating the literature as appropriate throughout the telling of the story" is also suggested by Glesne (2006:27).

My relationship with the literature (exploration) was thus sustained for the duration of the study. Gill (1998) points out how such a relationship is an inter-constructive process. This approach helped me, not only to reconstruct the research of others, but also to emerge as (is constructed in and by the process) a more accomplished self, "as having a wider and more sophisticated vision, a greater knowledge of the field" (25).

I also explored the literature to identify the lacunae in the research as indicated in Chapter 1. In Chapters 2–6, the review was used to explain the assumptions, theoretical frameworks and the research design (Marshall & Rossman 1999; Glesne 2006).

Finally, generating literature perspectives, as an integrated process, was employed to embed my study (Marshall & Rossman 1999; Neuman 2003; Glesne 2006; Babbie & Mouton 2009).

6.4.1.3.2 Triangulation

In research, the term 'triangulation' normally refers to the combination or convergence of different sources, be it methods, observers, theories, methodologies, data sets or cases also referred to as 'units of analysis' in my study (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 2002; Richardson 2004; Tobin & Begley 2004; Babbie & Mouton 2009; Silverman 2011). I would like to invoke the term 'corroboration' (Stake 2005) as opposed to 'triangulation' or 'crystallisation'. I find 'corroboration' a more appropriate term in the context of my study, as explained earlier, but I use the term 'triangulation' because of its broader accessibility and since it is a "more well-examined approach" (Tobin & Begley 2004).

Stake (2005) also points out that multiple perspectives can be used to verify meaning. In a dyadic analysis related to married couples, Julien *et al.* (1992) showed that the perspectives of the two dyadic partners and that of the researcher created three distinct constructions of the same dyadic experience. Eisikovits and Koren (2010) also argue, from their research using dyadic interviews, that dyadic perspectives create an additional perspective resultant from integrating both partners' versions of the dyad. I utilised multiple perspectives via mentor, mentee and dyadic texts. The first two texts represent the emic realities of the peer-mentors or mentees whereas the dyadic text, to a certain extent, represents the etic reality primarily constructed from the dyadic analysis process applied to make sense of the peer-mentoring relationship. It is clear from the analysis processes that three life worlds are identified, namely that of the peer-mentor, the mentee and the researcher's

interpretation of the dyadic reality. In CSR (as applied in my study) the dyadic reality constituted an etic reality that was inclusive of descriptions and explanations of the emic meanings or texts generated. This created different perceptions of the case— in my study, the peer mentoring relationship (Silverman 2011). Day-Ashley (2013:103) observes that:

> " … [m]ultiple methods and sources are often made use of to achieve in-depth understanding of cases through triangulation of methods and sources to confirm emerging findings and to point to contradictions and tension … that may highlight areas for analysis and help to draw insights and interpretations".

I argued earlier that it is important to develop a deep understanding in CSR. Based on their dyadic research, Eisikovits and Koren (2010) posit that the more perspectives we gain, the deeper understanding becomes. I share this point of view, which was also one of the functions of triangulation in my study. Silverman (2011), in a discussion of triangulation, points out how both Seale (1999) and Dingwall (1997) concur with the view that triangulation deepens one's understanding of different aspects of a topic or issue. By introducing the concept of "thoroughly partial" understanding, Richardson (2004:483) emphasises that this deepened understanding does not in any way imply complete understanding. In the context of my study, this implies an understanding that is open to re-interpretation, re-thinking, and re-knowing. This is the essence of social constructionism, relational cultural theory and the philosophy of Ubuntu used as the theoretical frameworks of my study.

I developed at least three texts in my research, as pointed out previously. The mentor and mentee texts supply additional data, each about the other. This made it possible for me to develop an understanding of the mentors and mentees based on texts that lay outside their respective socio-personal realities. Woodside (2010) comments that developing an understanding, for example, of the mentor based on the mentee's text, depicting the mentee's understanding or experience of the mentor, constitutes a form of meta-sense-making. In my study this created a practice of making sense of a prior sense-making process, thus adding another dimension of triangulation, or to quote Stake (2005), corroboration, to my study.

I applied triangulation on two levels in my study: firstly, as a technique to validate findings (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 2002; Babbie & Mouton 2009) and, secondly, as one with which to gain a deeper and more grounded understanding of the data (Seale 1999; Silverman 2006). It seemed to me that triangulation (corroboration) made a stronger

contribution to a more reflexive analysis of my data than would have been the case if it were regarded as a pure test of validity (Mays & Pope 2000). Finally, Abma and Stake (2014) posit that triangulation can be utilized as a technique to prevent overcoding.

6.4.1.3.3 Reflexivity and the position of the researcher

The researchers' quest to approach objectivity and create interpretive space between themselves and the phenomenon being researched has consistently been confronted by the inability to escape from the social world which they co-inhabit with the phenomena being studied (Hammersley & Atkinson 1996; Glesne 2006; Springer 2010). This created a self-awareness that I, as researcher, had to deal with. As Merriam *(*2002) and Patton (2002) point out; the notion of reflexivity has been a means of dealing with this increasing emphasis on self-awareness. Macbeth (2001:35) points out that an increased interest in reflexivity foregrounds the intersections between author-researcher, other, text, and the challenges presented by the representational exercise itself.

Reflexivity places the onus of self-reflection and self-understanding on the researcher in the context of the relationships embedded in the research process. These would include relationships with the self (author) other (research participants), text (readings and writing) and world (research context). Reflexivity is thus located in a multi-relational context. The theoretical frameworks and assumptions are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, which also reports on Ravitch and Riggan's (2012) exploration of how these frameworks assisted the researcher in dealing with forces and influences of bias on the empirical aspect of research. I have also reflected on and been motivated by my decisions regarding my research design, unit of analysis, data analysis approach, and the use of a dyadic approach (Chapters 3–6).

Finally, on a more personal note, I attempted to deal with the challenge of reflexivity by writing reflective notes to myself from time to time as an important aspect (also see Willig 2009) and Appendices 1A and 1B).

6.4.1.3.4 Transcriptions

Transcriptions, as with CSR in general, were pivotal to my study. As interviewing was the key method used to gather data, all interviews were transcribed. This posed a range of challenges that could compromise the research process.

My first challenge was to capture reality as truthfully as possible. Huberman and Miles (2002) claim that transcription is a transformational activity. This view is echoed in the literature (Miller & Crabtree 1999; Terre Blanche & Durrheim 2002; Oliver, Serovich & Mason 2005). Transcription as a transformational activity is explicated by Kvale (2009:92–93) follows: "[T]o transcribe means to transform, to change from one form to another … the direct face-to-face conversation becomes abstracted and fixated into a written form."

The process of transforming the oral text into a written text, the transcription, generates a second level of abstraction, the first being the audio recording. The transcription becomes a re-representation of the audio recording, which is a representation of the 'lived interview'. Given that transcriptions are re-representations which reduce the lived interview experiences to fossilizations or frozen interpretive constructs. Silverman (2006:204–5) argues that there is no perfect transcript and that "completeness is an illusion". Kvale (2009:93) bluntly states that transcriptions are decontextualised and diminished versions of the interview conversations.

The challenge in my study was to generate transcriptions that were less impoverished and more sensitive to their original contexts, and to be as impartial was practically possible, as required by the theoretical frame and purpose of this research. I needed to decide how detailed each of the transcriptions ought to be. This question was necessitated by the nature of transcription as a representation that involved selection, reduction and interpretation (Miller & Crabtree 1999; Huberman & Miles 2002; Kvale 2009). I was also mindful that transcriptions can affect the way in which data are conceptualised, how participants are understood (Oliver *et al.* 2005), and how these participants are voiced.

The interviews used in this research were transcribed verbatim. In the transcripts, the silences and tokens and fillers of the spoken text were maintained (e.g. uhm, OK, yes, etc.). My interest in the text was in the informational context whilst remaining as close to an authentic representation of the spoken text as possible. The concern of my study, following Oliver *et al.* (2005) was in the substance of the interview; that is, the meanings and perceptions created during the interviews.

I argue that the position taken with regard to transcription supports the interpretations and ideological positions of my study. The processes that were used are described under the

heading of methods to increase the transparency and validity of the process followed (Oliver *et al.* 2005) and to indicate that it was not a behind-the-scenes activity but one that was central to the research process I followed.

6.4.1.3.5 Prolonged engagement

Authors in the field (Guba & Lincoln 1994; Glesne 2006; Creswell 2009) agree that time spent at the research site contributes to the trustworthiness of the inquiry. Creswell (2009) holds that the researcher also develops a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study with time spent at the research site. This raises the quality of the interpretation of and engagement with the data.

According to Glesne (2006), a prolonged engagement also assists the researcher in developing a deeper relationship and building trust with the participants. It also helps the researcher to gain a better understanding of the culture of the research site and participants.

The amount of time I spent at the research site for this project was one academic year. During this period, it was possible to develop a relationship of trust with the research participants. It also created the opportunity for me to gain a better understanding of the context and culture in which the peer-mentoring programme and peer-mentoring dyads were embedded. The time I spent on site also contributed to a better understanding and analysis of the data. Prolonged engagement by the researcher can therefore also be applied as a procedure to prevent overcoding (Abma & Stake 2014).

6.4.1.3.6 Saturation

Babbie and Mouton (2009) suggest that saturation can be linked to the amount of time spent at the research site. They recommend that researchers "stay in the field until saturation occurs" as a procedure that contributes towards credibility (277). De Vos *et al.* (2005:294) indicate that when a researcher experiences a repetition of information or findings (Abma & Stake 2014) and no longer hears anything new, the saturation point has been reached. I engaged with the research participants on several occasions over a period of one academic year. During this process, I developed a keen understanding of the peer mentors and mentees. This enabled me to establish points of information redundancy in the data-gathering process (interviews) and to develop a clearer sense of saturation, given my

knowledge about the research site and participants. This contributed positively to the interpretation and discussion of the data as reported on in Chapters 7 and 8.

Finally, I selected the techniques and criteria discussed above as pertinent to my study and applied them as discussed. My selection was not exhaustive: only those I understood to be critical to my study were included.

6.5 CASE SELECTION

The selection of ‘cases’ is critical to case study designs. The word "case" in the context of my study is the peer-mentoring dyad and should not be construed to mean that research participants have been turned into objects for the purposes of conducting research. They are given voice through the research as I, as best I can, capture their emic experience and give a detailed analysis of how they experience, in my study, peer-mentoring dyads. Three pertinent aspects that I considered were the selection logic, the number of cases selected, and the highly contextual nature or boundedness of the case studies.

I applied the logic of purposive selection in my study. The application of deliberate purposive selection was driven by the logic of developing a deep understanding of the dyad under study as located within the mentoring context. Contrasting case study research with quantitative research, Thomas (2011) argues that case studies deal with the complex interaction of a range of factors in a few cases at an intensive level. In my study on peer mentoring dyads, the cases were therefore not selected on the basis of representativeness but for their informativeness and depth of examination of a social phenomenon (Rule & John 2011; Babbie 2013); which is why a small number of cases could be selected (Mabry 2008) in line with Eisenhardt’s (1989:545) argument "while there is no ideal number of cases, a number between 4 and 10 cases usually work well". In this study, I purposely selected four dyads, mindful of Eisenhardt’s (1989) caveat that an increase in the number of cases considerably raises the levels of complexity and the sheer volume of the data, which could make the research unmanageable.

I invited only complete dyads—that is, those peer-mentoring dyadic partners who had both participated in all the events, meetings and prescribed dyadic meetings of the mentoring-programme for the entire academic year and who could provide rich information (Rule & John 2011) to participate in my study. I followed the guidance of Mabry (2008) and

Eisenhardt (1989) in selecting a small number of cases, a position supported by Thomas (2011).

Cases studies, by their very nature, are contextually bounded. It is therefore important to understand the elements of the case within its natural context. In my research, the unit of analysis (the dyad) was embedded in the peer-mentoring programme which constituted its natural context. Each of the four dyads selected was treated as a unit on its own—as a whole. This made it possible for the logic of causal analysis to be applied when cross-case analyses were conducted. It is important at this point to note that the cases (dyads) primarily make sense in the broader peer-mentoring context at the university residences and in the particular peer-mentoring relationships.

Figure 6.1 illustrates the contextual embeddedness of the dyads and shows the selection criteria applied.

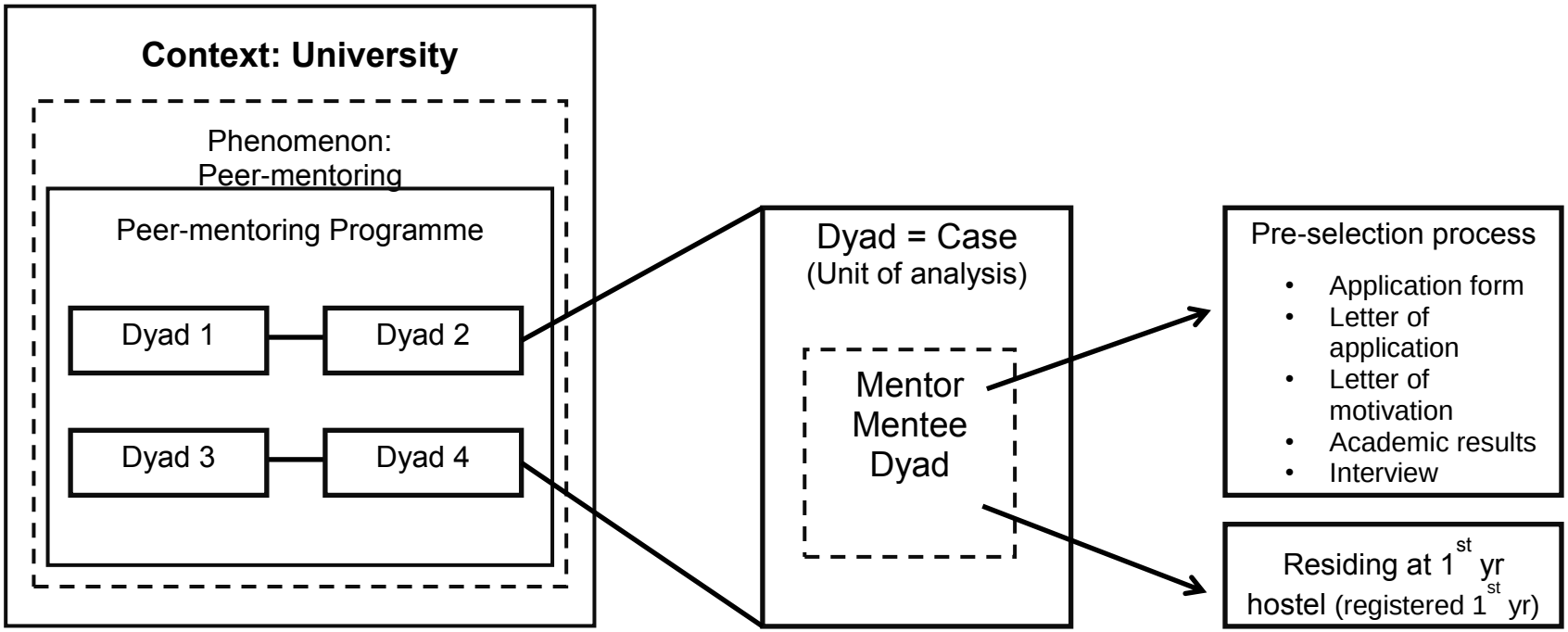

Figure 6.1: Context of dyads

6.6 DATA COLLECTION

At the end of the peer-mentoring programme, separate semi-structured in-depth interviews of about 45–60 minutes' duration were conducted with the participating peer mentors and mentees at the offices of the centre for student development. This venue was selected because the mentors and mentees were familiar with it, it provided privacy, and it was conducive to recording the interviews. As the researcher, I conducted the interviews with the assistance of two peer mentors who could also engage with the interviewees, thus adding the peer dimension to the interviews, and help to create a more stress-free interview space.

I acted as a co-conversationalist employing declarative statements, invitations to expand, and functional silences to create the spaces for the interviewees to generate their own responses in a manner comfortable to them (Dana *et al.*1992). It was by creating these spaces in the interviews that I made it possible for the interviewees to 'fill' the spaces and move beyond the conventional responses driven by reactivity and, sometimes, the myopic interviewer-researcher intrusions of trying to usurp or inhabit the lived experiences or stories of the interviewees. It was the reciprocity and power-sharing that created real turn-taking which contributed towards the truthfulness of the interview as conversation.

Finally, to create balance, two independent mentors were invited to sit in and participate in each of the interviews, were briefed in broad terms, and invited to bring along their peer-mentor perspective to the interviews. This approach counter-balanced the researcher-driven perspective and tried to meet the requirements of empathy, understanding and patience in the listening process (Altricher *et al.* 2008). Consequently, the interviewees seemed more relaxed and negotiated the conversation with more confidence.

Figure 6.2 broadly illustrates participant selection and the data collection route followed in the three programme time zones (pre-, during and post-).

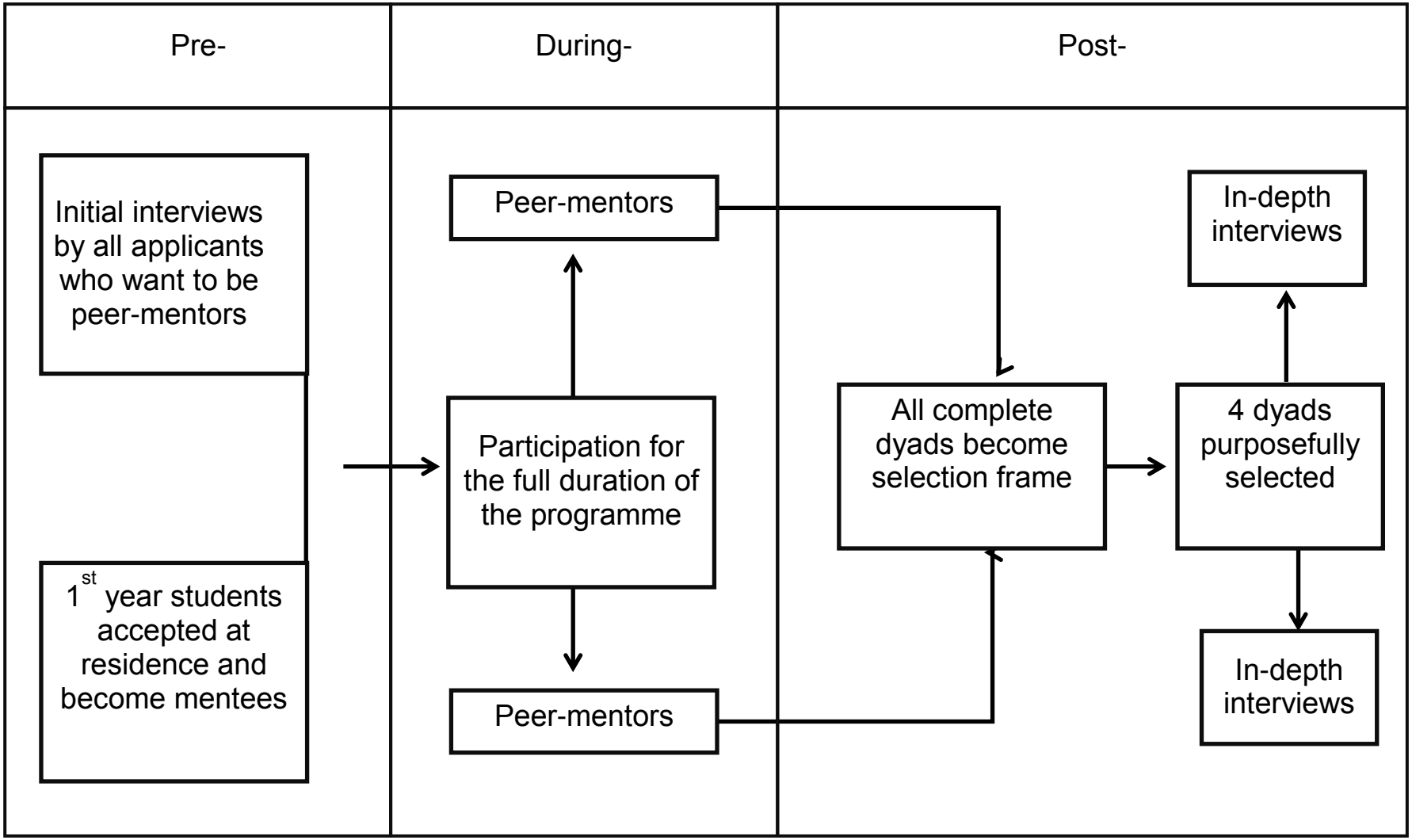

Figure 6.2: Participant selection process and data collection route

It is clear from Figure 6.2 that the participants were not pre-selected. The logic of purposive sampling, in the context of this study, was the introduction of the notion of self-selection. Participants co-determined their inclusion in the sampling frame by participating fully, completing all the requirements of the programme and, finally, by distinguishing themselves as programme participants with rich lived experiences and as the best candidates to serve the purpose of the research question. Thus one intuits self-selection (as opposed to pre-selection) as a strong element of the logic of purposive sampling.

6.6.1 Data collection instruments

During the weekly feedback meetings with all the mentors, the fortnightly meetings with the head mentors, and the continuous training sessions, the researcher identified areas to explore in the interviews. Themes from the literature were also explored as very broad guidelines. Finally, from own intuition and experience, further possible themes emerged.

A broad set of questions exploring potential peer mentoring areas was developed to create a 'meeting space' for the interviews. This broad set of questions was developed to facilitate covering mentee-mentor experiences instead of a question-answer style of interaction. I also tried to create greater freedom for interviewees to introduce issues relevant to them that might have eluded me.

These interviews focused on the perceptions and lived experiences of the participants in their peer-mentoring relationships and covered both the psychosocial and academic issues related to the programme. The roles that the participants fulfilled in the peer-mentoring relationships and their personal growth were also explored in the interviews (see Addendum 3).

6.6.2 Data analysis

The interviews were transcribed by an experienced transcriber. The verbatim transcriptions were carried out with the retention of the tokens and fillers of the spoken text. Although all the paralinguistic features were not captured in the transcription, an attempt was made to remain as faithful to the spoken text as possible, capturing its substance and meaning and perceptions as communicated during the interview (Oliver *et al.* 2005). These transcriptions were then converted to rich text files (rtf) and coded to protect the identity of the interviewees. The rtf-format is supported by ATLAS.ti, a CAQDAS (computer-aided qualitative data analysis software) program utilised in this research.

Konopásek (2008) makes the point that computer software packages can create complex virtual environments in which the researcher has access to all the important data with a single click. Friese (2012) concurs and notes that CAQDAS cannot analyse data but functions as a tool for supporting the researcher to do the analysis. Peters and Wester (2007:654) aptly captured these ideas as follows:

> Computer programs are used as a tool for making transcripts, recording procedure by way of memo files, coding the material, describing the coding procedure, making overview of codes, selecting relevant parts from the material, making summaries, matrices or tables and selecting text segments as illustrations for the report.

In my study, this created a structured, transparent, consistent and reliable process. Friese (2012) points out that this process can be documented; thus the steps and procedures followed are open to view (see Appendices 4, 5 and 6). Peters and Wester (2007) comment that it has become unthinkable that intensive interpretive analysis is conducted without adequate software support, a practice that is deemed a necessity by researchers nowadays. Friese (2012) concludes that it is essentially still the researcher who does the analysis and CAQDAS remains a tool, albeit systematic, sophisticated and standardised. This was also my experience in employing ATLAS.ti.

The following steps were followed using ATLAS.ti:

- I created a file called Hermeneutic Unit or HU for short. This file acted as the container that tracked and held all the data.
- The transcriptions (converted to rtf) were then assigned to the HU. These files are called primary documents and contain the texts for analysis.
- These texts were read to get a sense of the words or terms as they appeared in the text. This was the most concrete level of analysis.
- Codes were created using the open-coding variant. This allowed me to create new codes suggested by the data. I did not use predetermined codes. This is a more abstract level than the previous one as the researcher interprets the text.
- Sections of the text were highlighted or marked and then a code was assigned.
- I created memos during the coding to help me not to lose any ideas, questions or insights that had occurred to me.

- The coded primary documents (transcripts) were re-read to check if the coding was consistent.
- A list of codes was generated to get an overview of the analytical frame (i.e. set of codes) to control for errors, synonyms, redundancies or gaps (oversights).
- A list of chunks of text assigned to codes was generated to get an overview and insight into which texts specific codes referred to.
- A list of codes was generated to create themes (families). This categorization of codes moved the process to the conceptual level. Codes were synchronized with the research questions to develop an internal coherence.
- A list of coded texts with codes and memos was generated for each primary document (transcript). Analysis at the level of memo-ing is the most abstract level of ATLAS.ti.
- Primary documents (transcripts) were then subjected to monadic analysis.
- Lists of coded texts for primary documents (transcripts) were matched—mentor x mentee dyads were created and subjected to dyadic analysis (adapted from Friese 2012).

ATLAS.ti facilitated a process that set a pathway for the researcher to engage and analyse the data on various levels: from concrete to abstract to conceptual. Subjecting the data to the ATLAS.ti process was phase 1 in the analysis process. Phase 2 consisted of two levels of analysis, namely a more descriptive and then an interpretive level. The selection of the dyad as a unit of analysis challenged me to utilize a dyadic approach to the analysis. The process used in this research was informed by two articles, namely those by Julien *et al.* (1992) and Eisikovits and Koren (2010). Julien *et al.* (1992) wrote on intimate interpersonal marital relationships and Esikovits and Koren (2010) wrote on couple-hood in old age. Both dealt with close relationships utilizing a dyadic approach. Both set out to use what Julien *et al.* (1992) referred to as dyadic methodology and Eisikovits and Koren (2010) simply called dyadic analysis on the descriptive and interpretive levels. They argue that this type of analysis can achieve a dyadic version that is more than simply the sum total of two monadic versions.

In order to make a dyadic analysis possible, I maintained the dyadic focus throughout the research procedure. This ranged from the selection procedure to the preparation of individual scripts with ATLAS.ti through to the analysis approach. This necessitated the interpretation of the data, not only as discrete individual scripts but also as dyadic, interactive lived experiences. Julien *et al.* (1992) claim that it is a necessary condition for dyadic conclusions and that it promotes insight into intra-dyadic patterns. This improved my understanding of the peer-mentoring dyads and the patterns and experiences that promoted transition from high school to higher education.

Julien *et al.* (1992) examined both partners' self-reports as their views referred to the self and the significant other. This does not go beyond a descriptive comparative analysis. I created a third report, namely the interpretive text as a reflective analysis of the dyadic partners' reports (Julien *et al.* 1992) which goes beyond description.

Eisikovits and Koren (2010), like Julien *et al.* (1992), also compared the reports of the dyadic partners. They approached the analysis from the perspective of examining the contrasts and overlaps operating on both descriptive and interpretive levels. This advanced the analysis to the inter-dyadic level which examined the individual texts in relation to each other by studying overlaps and contrasts. This inter-dyadic text that reflected emotional attachment (Esikovits & Koren 2010) is also underpinned by attachment theory as discussed in Chapter 5. Eisikovits and Koren (2010) also argue that their dyadic analysis approach can be used in dyadic relationships other than couple relationships. I adapted the Esikovits and Koren approach for mentoring dyads which also reflects close relationships that shared interpersonal spaces and experiences.

The data development process as developed from Julien *et al.* (1992) and Eisikovits and Koren (2010) comprises of the following steps in this research:

- Monadic analysis of peer mentor giving the peer-mentor perspective of the dyadic experience;
- Monadic analysis of peer mentee giving the peer-mentee experience and construction of the dyadic experience
- Dyadic analysis of peer mentoring dyad examining overlaps and contrasts
- Final discussion of dyadic analysis across the dyads

6.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following ethical principles were observed in this study:

- The director of the university residences involved granted formal permission to the researcher to collect the data.
- The peer mentors and mentees completed letters of consent giving their informed consent to participate in the research (see Appendix 2).
- The peer mentors and mentees were briefed prior to the interviews and gave their informed consent to participate in the research.

All the participants were briefed about the purpose of the research and their anonymity and the confidential management of the data were guaranteed. They understood that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time they did not feel at ease with the process.

The transcripts of the participants were code-named to protect the identity of the participants. I also undertook to protect the identity and good name of the university. Finally, the undertaking was given that the data would be used for research purposes only.

6.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I set out the methods followed in my study, discussed the approach I had taken, and explained the logic underpinning my study. I restated my research problem and subsidiary questions and related them to the design of my study, which I used to motivate my research strategy of choice, namely case study research (CSR). I argued for the appropriacy of CSR for dyadic relational research with the mentoring dyad as unit of analysis.

I then discussed criteria and techniques to build rigour into my study. In this process I established a conceptual link between the notion of triangulation (corroboration) and the dyadic analysis approach I developed from the work of Julien *et al.* (1992) and Eisikovits and Koren (2010) by showing how the three empirical texts developed from the data fed into triangulation (corroboration).

The description of the data collection process was followed by an account of the ethical principles applied in my study. I applied the techniques described here in the next two chapters (Chapters 7 and 8), which constitute the empirical section of my study.

CHAPTER 7

PRESENTATION OF DATA

"Although the data are individual perceptions, we consider them dyadic because they account for the patterning between two people. With the patterns derived from these data, the researcher can infer similarity, discrepancy, mutuality, complementarity, and other relationship properties."

(Thompson & Walker 1982:894)

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the manner in which the data were analysed in relation to the four major themes set out in the practical framework developed in Chapter 5. These themes responded to the critical questions listed in Chapter 1 and revisited in Chapter 6 (methodology). The themes were interrelatedness, transition, self-growth and self-construction. Interrelatedness explored relationship issues such as trust, caring and power, whereas self-growth dealt with confidence, spirituality, self-perception and developing skills such as time management and engaging with others. Transition reflected on the challenges of adapting to higher education psychosocially and academically, and self-construction related to how the participants reconstructed themselves and assumed different roles as a result of the relationship. In my research, I dealt with the themes as they emerged from the data and not in any set order. As these themes were interrelated; separating them was artificial and was merely a practical measure to facilitate reading and making sense of the data. This was the first level of application of the practical framework. The theoretical aspects are discussed in the practical framework outlined in Chapter 8 to guide the discussion of the findings presented and analysed here.

7.2 ANALYSIS OF DYADS

The basic framework for discussing the data analysis conducted in the course of the study and reported on in this section is as follows. The data analysis is presented sequentially, starting with dyad 1 through to dyad 4, and follows a set structure. The monadic presentations and analysis of the peer mentor and mentee begin separately and conclude on a dyadic level. The monadic presentation and discussion follow the themes indicated earlier. Next, the dyadic presentation follows the dyadic analysis model developed in Chapter 6. This model considers the overlaps and contrasts on the descriptive and interpretive levels of the data. Eisikovits and

Koren (2010) refer to the descriptive levels as open realities and the interpretive levels as hidden realities. These hidden realities can only be revealed through analysis on the dyadic level.

The monadic versions (of both peer mentors and mentees) create, through contrasts and similarities on the interpretive level, yet a third version. This is the dyadic version (Eisikovits & Koren 2010). It is only at this level that contrasts can be observed and the importance of dyadic analysis in facilitating a better understanding of the phenomenon (in this instance, dyadic peer mentoring in the context of higher education) can be realised. This is a way of engaging with the data relationally and developing a dyadic as opposed to a monadic (individuated) understanding of the peer mentoring process.

In conclusion, I concur with Eisikovits and Koren (2010), that exploring contrasts and overlaps in relationships is the crux of dyadic analysis. Please note that I refer to all the peer mentors in the feminine and to the mentees in the masculine form to facilitate ease of reading and support anonymity and confidentiality as the text unfolds.

7.2.1 Dyad 1

7.2.1.1 Monadic analysis

Peer mentor

Transition

The peer mentor dealt with the issue of transition on two levels. Firstly, there was the physical encounter and help provided "more on the social part of it, trying to get the first years to adapt to the residency". This was a way of trying to get the mentees to feel welcome and adapt to the social aspect of the university. This assistance was informed firstly by the peer mentor's own experience as a first-year student. This was the first way of easing students into the university, which helped them to relax, mix with and meet other students—some of whom were in the same position that they were in and others who were already part of the university.

Secondly, there was the realisation of the mentees' needs which informed the peer mentor's commitment to help them. This was supported by the peer mentor's experience:

> I know how it is to be a first-year at, in foreign places especially coming straight from high school … So I really can teach you a little bit of what I know, what I've experienced, maybe I can give it to you.

There was a strong sense of being other-directed but that it was not only about the self. It was this understanding that developed the relationship into a reciprocal engagement and set it up to be a relationship that facilitated the process of transition.

The peer mentor also physically met the mentees and took "students from the gate to the reception". This was the mentees' first real encounter with the university and helped them to settle in, not to feel lost, and to realise that there were people who cared. This could be construed as the initial phase of attachment to mentors and the institution.

Self-growth

It is clear from the above that caring was a critical underpinning of other-directedness. This sense of 'us-' or 'we-ness' was what shaped the way in which the dyadic relationship developed. This caring experience extended beyond the students' (mentees') first encounter with the university. As the programme progressed, the peer mentor reached out to mentees who did not attend group sessions and encouraged them to become part of the group. The peer mentor tried to get mentees to understand the importance of engaging with others: "I make an effort to go to the person because sometimes people do not want to come to the group, that's what I've noticed, that is what I've realised."

This peer mentor also placed herself in the position of the mentees and tried to understand their reluctance to attend the group session: "… so I realised maybe people don't come to the group discussion … maybe they're scared … not that they are not interested in attending." The peer mentor assumed a 'maternal' role by encouraging mentees and showing understanding without being judgemental. The peer mentor became the significant other, the wiser person and was reconstructed as "[I am] a mother, I am a sister, I am a guardian." The assumption of multiple roles seemed to be a response to the needs of the mentee; the role-shifting was a sign of sensitivity to and an understanding of the contextual dyadic needs at the time. This demanded a strong sense of other-directedness and flexibility.

The peer mentor cited a practical event to conclude this theme: "I never had any hassle– only once, one came to me. She was crying [as] she had to write the next day. I had to take my time and helped her, which I did." The peer mentor clearly put the mentee first and

understood her plight. The peer mentor assumed the role of a compassionate 'big' sister or mother. These are the actions that contributed to the transition and adaptation of the mentee to the university life. The peer mentor was taking her own study time to help the mentee.

The issue of allocation of time in the context of the dyad seemed to be an important and sensitive one. In constructing this, dyad mentors were challenged to manage their time carefully. The way they constructed themselves in the relationship (big brother, mother, guide, etc.) influenced how they used their time. A peer mentor remarked: "It's the way you decide this is my own time … never forget that." The peer mentor realised that time must be reserved for the self but that, in time of great need, it is important to put the mentee first.

The peer mentor introduced a spiritual dimension into the programmatic dyadic experience: "I've gained a lot of knowledge from it and I really, I feel blessed to be part of this programme." This allusion to a spiritual experience suggests that the peer mentor was constructing the mentoring role as a spiritual reality (experience).

The peer mentor's experience of affirmation and appreciation by the mentee contributed to the process of self-construction in the dyad. Affirmation is critical for growth. How this affirmation was expressed had an impact on the self-construction of the peer mentor. Dyadic partners became meaningful in the relational context. The peer mentor expressed the experience of recognition as follows: "I had my meeting, everybody left … and I get a knock at my door, one of the mentees, he comes and says, 'I think you're just very cool', and he gave me a big hug. Wow, that's my confidence went from zero to ten." The peer mentor concluded by saying that even, if only one person showed appreciation, it really made a difference.

This recognition was also a way for this young mentee to express his thanks for having been accepted and feeling that he belonged at the university. He had someone to talk to. This is crucial to transition and making a success of one's first year at university.

The peer mentor reflected that it was in her new-found role as mother that personal growth had been effected:

> You know that all my mentees are younger than me. So they really say I am their big sister, I think I realise that you never know what you are until someone else tells you. So today when I look at myself I'm like I really grow and you know I'm a mother actually but when I never really felt it but when … but now it feels good.

There was not only the realisation that personal growth had taken place as a result of a broadening role in the relationship: the peer mentor also realised that this had come about because of others, the mentee, those who affirmed her and made her "feel good". The peer mentor accepted this new role with the concomitant responsibilities. Personal growth took place in the relational context and was brought about by the response of the other as a critical element to this growth. The peer mentor finally claimed that she had become more mature and that her levels of confidence had also increased.

Interrelatedness

The peer mentor did not only see mentoring as a process of reaching out to the other but also understood the reciprocal nature of this dyadic relationship. It was thus not only about the mentee gaining from the process:

> … you … always gain something from it, be it from the other person or the other person in the programme or the mentee, you both at the receiving end at the end of the day. So it is not only about me, but it's also about you, I want to help you, about you to get to do the things at residence.

This was an important moment. The peer mentor realised that they could also learn from mentees. This runs counter to the traditional understanding that the mentor is the older and wiser one from whom the mentee learns. This could indicate a power shift, or at the very least, power-sharing in terms of the right to teach. This power-sharing was also present in the peer mentor's intention to help the mentee to do things at the residence. The right or opportunity to do things signifies a deeper sense of belonging and ownership. This was a crucial shift in taking the initiative, which is an important indicator of transition.

This peer mentor made the important discovery that "… whenever you think you know a lot, you actually don't until you visit other people's life, learn things from other people, other people's experience". This showed that the life of the mentee informed that of the peer mentor, which was an important insight as the peer mentor had to "visit other people's [mentees'] life" [lives] in order to learn about the self, to realise that one did not know much. It was more than role-shifting: it was a case of peer mentor becoming mentee in order to learn about the self. This is also a reversal of the beneficiary role, an important preparation for a power shift. For transition to be effected, the power differential needs to develop greater equilibrium.

Mentee

Interrelatedness

Interrelatedness is interpreted on three levels, namely relational reciprocity, power, and interdependence. Firstly, in terms of the relationship, the mentee felt that they had become friends. The mentee had developed a sense of closeness: "… we like [are] kind of close compared to other people in the res [residence]". The mentee felt that there was now "… someone to like talk to …", someone you could tell "… personal stuff [to] sometimes …". Clearly, a very close relationship which involved a great deal of trust had developed, as the mentee could share "personal stuff". The vulnerability that such "personal stuff" created meant that the mentee could only take such a risk where there was trust and openness to share. This substantiated the reported closeness of the relationship experienced by the mentee—a closeness that was described as friendship: "… we like uhm friends with them …" There was also an understanding of the interdependence in the relationship: "… like people are depending on you so that the meeting can happen …"

Secondly, in terms of assuming some power or responsibility, the mentee reflected that he had to "… kind of like hosted something, a function which is like a first time". The mentee accepted the control, was in charge, and learned to organise and feel good about it. The peer mentor created the space and opportunity for this growth. The mentee developed to the point of wanting to emulate the peer mentor and remarked that "… because I am willing to give my time … to the programme, because I see it's helping, and I want to sit down and help others". It is clear that the mentee assumed the initiative to "give my time" of his own accord to make a difference to the lives of others (as the peer mentor had done).

The mentee also reconstructed his position and role towards others as a result of the impact of the peer mentor and the mentoring experience. This also came about as a result of personal growth:

> … because I was this kind of person like, I just wanted to do things on my own. I don't wanted to ask people, I don't wanted to involve people in my life … that I had that now that I, I involve other people and tell them if I have problems then I tell them, how can I solve that. It really helped ….

The mentee developed enough trust to be vulnerable and open to the other. There was a great deal of trust that supported the role of feeling close to someone and being a friend, as

discussed earlier. In this shift towards understanding the self, there was an acute awareness of the importance of interdependence in the dyadic relationship.

Self-construction

The mentee's willingness to help others can also be interpreted as a vision to act as peer mentor in the future. It indicates that the mentee was gradually assuming the role of a peer mentor to others. As such, the mentee's role definition extended into assuming the functions of a peer mentor, which was a sign of personal growth and development.

Personal growth

In line with the role extension of the mentee, the following comment underscores the growth that had taken place: "… yeah, I am still the same person but I have just changed some stuff like learning to involve other people and stuff …." The mentee was no longer "… the same person …" and the comment reflects the delicate balance between the familiar and the new. The mentoring relationship had made this growth possible and this remark introduced a tipping point in the direction of growth of the mentee. The mentee realised that he was no longer the same person. This development is essential in adapting to higher education because, not only is change a requirement of higher education, but the mentee must also assume ownership of the process and take the initiative.

Transition

The mentee realised that "… it was very nice at first having to meet new people and coming from a different province, having to know other people's … and it has helped me with my work".

The ability to work with others is an important skill for transition as it assists in developing a sense of belonging and sharing the social space at the institution with others. It is also a critical survival skill. The transition to higher education demands that the person concerned meet and learn to work with 'new' people.

The development of a sense of belonging is an important step in transition as it facilitates ownership of the new situation. Referring to the role of the peer mentor, the mentee remarked, "… okay, as mentor it actually helps me if you … involve other people in your academic life and stuff." This mentee clearly understood the benefit of receiving both

academic and psychosocial support from the peer mentor. Academic support is crucial to transition and it is important for mentees to realise this and accept academic support as they make the transition to higher education.

7.2.1.2 Dyadic analysis

Correlation between the descriptive and interpretive levels

The peer mentor believed that it was necessary for mentees to meet other people as they make the transition to university. There was also an understanding that they potentially feared to join groups. This created the need for the peer mentor to reach out to the mentee:

> I make an effort to go to the person because sometimes people do not want to come to the group, that's what I've noticed, that is what I realised, so I realised maybe people don't come to the group … maybe they're scared …

This assessment by the peer mentor was confirmed by the mentee who stated: "I was this kind of person like, I just wanted to do things on my own, you know, just myself being an individual, just doing things on my own."

The mentee repeated that he wanted to do things on his own and continued by saying that he did not want to involve people in his life. At the initial stages there seemed to be a clear resistance to allowing others into his life. The overlap on the descriptive level, in the monadic analysis of the dyadic partners is confirmed on the interpretive level of the dyadic analysis.

Correlation on descriptive level, contrast on interpretive level

The overlaps on the descriptive level are not always manifested on the interpretive level. This often happens because of divergent interpretations by the dyadic partners. The overlap that points to power-sharing and progress towards equilibrium in the power differential on the descriptive level contrasts with the interpretive level that could actually indicate a tendency towards a consolidation of the peer mentor's position of power: "… there was a time I had to buy stuff … I kind of like hosted something, a function …"

The mentee stated that he "had to buy stuff" and "kind of like hosted" the event. This suggested that someone was carrying out an instruction and that the action was not voluntary. The hosting was also "kind of" and not stated in definite terms. This notion was confirmed on the interpretive level by the peer mentor's remarks: "[I] ... give each person a chance to

arrange the meeting …" It was the peer mentor who finally decided who would receive a chance and when. The power still very much resided with the peer mentor in this instance. The peer mentor also stated clearly that they "... all have to work in this programme and [we] all have to work together to make it successful". It is the peer mentor who seemed to wield the power as opposed to it being a collective process.

The mentee referred to the relationship that developed as one of friendship that encompassed trust, as can be seen in the mentee's version of the analysis. The peer mentor talked about a familial relationship, one of being a big brother or sister and even a mother. On the interpretive level, one must note that this conclusion was prefaced by "… you know, my mentees are younger than me, so they really say I am their big sister …" The peer mentor justified her role based on age as a norm for the position of authority. The peer mentor also observed that she was a "… mother … I am guardian". These roles both imply normative authority and power. There was thus a contrast between the descriptive and the interpretive level.

7.2.2 Dyad 2

7.2.2.1 Monadic analysis

Peer mentor

Inter-relatedness

This peer mentor had had prior experience as a mentee. She reflected on this experience as a very positive and inspirational one:

> I had a good relationship with my peer mentor …" and "… you know he just inspires me to do, to be the best that I can, you know. He really inspires me as a person because I mean this guy is actually younger than me also ….

It follows that positive relationships are critical to growth and development, as is evident from the previous statements. An issue that emerged from the reflections of this peer mentor was that her peer mentor was younger than what she was. This contradicted the traditional notion that mentors are generally older than mentees. I concede that the peer mentor was academically and also in terms of peer-mentor status the superior member of the dyad. Nevertheless, the fact that the peer mentor was the younger of the two did not affect the

quality of the relationship negatively. This raises the question whether age differences are a critical factor in effective mentoring relationships.

The peer mentor stated that her prior relationship had inspired her to become a peer mentor and to emulate her peer mentor. She confidently stated: "You know what I can offer, what [that] I can improve on it as well." This is ultimately what made her determined to become a peer mentor. She could envision experience and reconstruct herself as a peer mentor.

At this point, the peer mentor assumed her peer mentor voice and reflected on the programme as follows:

> I think in my own experience so far about the programme, umh, it has help me as a person you know because at first you know when people just look at you like no, it's just a guy and then to actually get somebody like a normal person come to you and say, "Bra [name] man, how are you doing?" Like, hey, you know the guys show you respect actually and for me it actually goes to show that you know I've played a part … it just goes to show I really made an impact and then for me [it] just goes to show …

There are three elements in this reflective account that relate to affirmation and growth. The first is that the peer mentor experienced recognition as a peer mentor, a person with status, with mentees looking up to her. She had earned this status because she had played a part. This points to the second affirmation, namely that she had made a worthy contribution. The third affirmation is that she had made an impact, made a difference, which provided the ultimate sense of achievement. Peer-mentoring is about making this impact, giving meaning to the lives of others. But, because of the reciprocal nature of the mentoring relationship, the relationship itself also had an impact on the peer mentor. She grew in the process and became a more confident person.

Personal growth

The peer mentor's first reflection in a peer mentor voice evoked the theme of personal growth. She commented: "Yeah, I think you do grow a lot as a person." She proceeded by saying that "[p]eople do look up to you, you don't just like you can do whatever you want [like] last year but you know what this year, because of what you do, people look up to you".

The peer mentor had come to the realisation that her actions were as much determined by herself as by others. She could no longer simply do as she liked, but she needed to act as mentees expected her to. She became an exemplar of good conduct and had to demonstrate

what it meant to be a good student and leader. There was a covert power shift that was driven from mentee expectations. The peer mentor no longer only belonged to herself or accounted to herself, but assumed the role as a public person—the mentee and other peer mentors and mentees constituting the 'public' in the context of the relationship and the programme. This brought about a degree of accountability and responsibility on the part of the peer mentor.

Reflecting on the day she was informed of her inclusion in the programme, the peer mentor could still say, "*Yogh*, wow, I was, I don't know, I really didn't expect that. I never did ..." She stated, however, that her inclusion was not accidental and remarked, "I believe everything was for a reason and yeah it was like, I got this." Her credo suggested that the reason behind her election transcended her humanness, that there was a higher power that made things possible or that there was a reason for and a purpose behind this election. This introduced a spiritual dimension into her understanding of her supposedly predestined election to the role of peer mentor. This was consistent with her humbleness to stay true to her roots and her quest to emulate her peer mentor whom she described as follows: "He'll sit there; he'll read a few pages through his Bible ... bless you with something." This peer mentor regarded her role as peer mentor as a spiritual engagement.

Finally, if students adapt to higher education to the point where they pass their courses, it can be construed as evidence of their successful transition from high school to higher education. It was evident from this peer mentor's reflections that her mentee had made this transition. The success, however, was not only that of the mentee alone. The peer mentor also benefitted from the process. The peer mentor remarked

> I was actually glad that I did, you know, that I actually did something. So it actually goes to show that me tutoring [the mentee] it's not just for *mahala* [meaning for nothing] or something, people actually go away … knowing something and me, just giving me that extra boost."

The peer mentor also claimed her share of the success; she had actually made a contribution. She emphasised that her input was not for "*mahala"* (for nothing) but that mentees actually benefitted. In this reflection the peer mentor made a direct connection between the mentee's success and her "extra boost". This underscores the reciprocal nature of the dyadic mentoring relationship at the level of benefitting from the interaction. The peer mentoring relationship that was initially set up to benefit the mentee now benefitted the peer mentor as well. This seems to be a reversal of the roles of benefactor and beneficiary. Both peer mentor and mentee shared transitory moments of equality, be it only as beneficiaries of the same

relational mentoring dyadic lived experiences. It was in this relational context that they were interdependently connected and held together in a shared space and time of growth and transitioning. This was a growth that manifested on different levels, such as the emotional, intellectual and social levels. It was evidence of a transition not only from high school to higher education but also from insecurity to confidence and from being one-dimensional (one role) to multidimensional (people) who could fulfil multiple roles.

Self-construction

Peer mentoring in the dyadic relational context is a dynamic process and, as the expectations were constructed and reconstructed by mentees, the peer mentor had to construct and reconstruct herself constantly. This indicates the interactive power of the mentees in this relationship. It was also expected of the peer mentor to have a 'final' picture of mentoring as she was cast in this position of role model. She not only had to live the role, but also to explain the role as others approached her with the hope of emulating her: "[Y]ou are actually a role model to these kids and whatever you do, these people look up to you and they start … because you get guys up to now, they say, '*Yogh*, I want to become a mentor, what, what do I have to do and what is the criteria and stuff', and you now just get a feel of what being a mentor is, you know."

It is evident that the peer mentor discovered herself through her relationship with the mentee. They now also expressed the same desire to become a peer mentor as she had done earlier. She had become the peer mentor for them that she had had and that she had hoped to become. The process had come full circle and was held up as a mirror to her. This mentoring was thus a serious matter and not to be taken lightly. It came with great responsibility as it also had potential future implications. The peer mentor realised that "it actually goes to show you know that there is a thing and it's something huge. It's not something to be taken lightly, you know that you [are] a mentor …"It is this knowledge that defined the peer mentor in the relationship and how she conducted herself. The peer mentor was no longer only a peer mentor by selection but she had consciously claimed and assumed the role.

The peer mentor also learned that she had limitations and this helped her to cope when she could not always rise to expectations. She reflected that "at the same time, you cannot please everybody you know as much as you want to, you cannot please everybody and that's the sad reality but in terms of how you can better on this people". This was an important reality

check for the peer mentor. It helped her not to be too disappointed when she could not help in the way she was expected to, or would have liked to. The peer mentor initially reflected about herself as follows: "I was very depressed when I came here because my matric results were not really that good" and this realisation helped her to understand not only her own limitations but also those of her mentee. She had been where her mentee was, but persevered and that was exactly the act of resilience that enabled her to be a realistic and effective peer mentor. She reached a new level of maturity in the relationship and her role as peer mentor.

The continuous construction and reconstruction of the peer mentor in the peer-mentoring relationship and the positive, affirmative experiences inspired her to develop a new future vision for herself: "[T]he experience meant for me uhm, one day I'll become a lecturer …" The vision or dream for the self is a sign of personal growth and also evidence of the ability to project oneself into the future. This might be an important ability for peer mentors as they need to be able to envision mentees as being successful in their future as new university students.

The peer mentor compared her mentoring experience to that of having been part of a family: "… and for you to be actually part of that family, you know it is actually an achievement". It is clear that she values family and being related to the mentee in familial terms. It speaks of support, a sense of belonging and guidance.

The peer mentor placed a high premium on family and used this as a support base for herself in terms of staying grounded. She did not lose touch with her roots as she constructed and reconstructed herself through the mentoring relationship. She explained and made sense of her relationship with mentees as follows:

> [Y]ou know I engage with these guys, not just at the level of, I am a mentor … you must respect me … I think I still have the quality in me that I am still a boy from … a boy from the hood or something you know, but many of the boys are from the location you see and for me to be one of those guys … this [mentee] needed you … and I think I engage a lot with these [mentees].

The peer mentor stayed close to her roots and, because she was authentic, the mentee could identify with her. She was not only a role model in terms of what it meant to be a successful university student, but also in terms of not losing her roots and becoming a beacon of hope for those coming from communities similar to hers. This made her significance as a role model transcend the confines of the university and extend into the 'hood' that she referred to.

Therefore, becoming a peer mentor does not have to mean becoming someone different, other than who and what the person is. Mentoring is only an extension and deepening of the mentor's relationship with the mentee as the mentor grows into becoming the significant other. The statement (about her strong connectedness to her roots) made by the peer mentor in this reflection is powerful and is not reflected anywhere else in the literature on peer mentoring in higher education that I have consulted. Her engagement with her mentees as being one of them created a sense of openness and identification with her in the mentees.

It was this open relationship that made it easier for the mentees to engage with the peer mentor. They understood and felt at ease with the peer mentor, who explained this relationship as follows: "I understand their life style … I just think that they feel more comfortable you know, coming to me and talk about stuff and issues." This might point to the importance of mentors and mentees sharing similar or common backgrounds.

The peer mentor understood her connectedness to the mentees and realised that she had discovered herself through their eyes: "… you [learn about yourself] from what you hear from people, like you never knew the greatness it was [in you]." It was in the context of an interpersonal relationship that the mentors and mentees attained meaning and discovered themselves through the 'eyes' and words of the other. Thus, the peer mentor could conclude, "I was really proud you know, I think he [the mentee] was really proud of, of what was brought out of [me] …"

Transition

This peer mentor's commitment explained her generosity with her own free time and her willingness to give it up for her mentee:

> … just having my free time, my own time and the guy [mentee] came over there ... and [said], … 'Oh, I need your help', and I'm like, 'Why not?' you know. I help the guy [mentee]; we spend an hour or two working on some problems. He actually up-levelled.

The peer mentor understood the importance of her own time but responded in the interests and needs of the mentee. This is indicative of the other-directedness of the peer mentor and the nature of the relationship. The peer mentor also reflected on the success of this engagement, namely that the mentee improved his marks ("up-levelled"). This helped the

mentee to build confidence and to develop a story of academic success which is a critical component of the transition from high school to higher education.

The "up-levelled" experience of the mentee was sustained and advanced through the peer mentor's academic support. The peer mentor reflected on this and remarked: "I was actually glad to say that because of that session the guy [mentee] actually passed."

Mentee

Inter-relationship

The mentee reflected on the relationship from three perspectives. Firstly, he pointed out that the peer mentor had taken the initiative to visit him on a weekly basis, "just to find out how we doing, our experiences, hum, stuff like that". The mentee reflected on this caring action of the peer mentor and stated: "It's good … uhm, he checked on us quite often …" This helped them to build a relationship that enabled the mentee to visit the peer mentor when he needed to do so. Secondly, the mentee felt free enough to take the initiative to approach the peer mentor and believed that the peer mentor would be available. The mentee noted:

> … you know you just need to talk to someone, you know you can walk two doors down just to knock at someone's door and someone is willing to listen whereas before … most of my friends are either upstairs or … not always available.

The peer mentor had become more readily available than the friends, which attested to the quality and nature of the relationship. The mentee explained this as follows: "[Well] once we got to know each other we sort of got close."

There are, however, indications of a power divide even in this closeness. There seemed to be a tacit understanding that this relationship was underpinned by an unequal power distribution. It also seemed that this was tacitly understood by both parties and played out in the relationship as it unfolded. The mentee experienced it as good to be "checked on quite often". The mentee valued and welcomed this action by the peer mentor, even in their meetings: "… yeah in our meetings [he checked on us] and it was good". It could be construed that the activity of being checking on created a sense of security, a consequence of which was the entrenchment of the disequilibrium of the power differential in the relationship. This did not, however, detract from the interrelatedness of the dyadic pair. The mentee summed up the

relationship as follows: "[S]o you know it is a give and take type of relationship." Both members of the dyad ultimately had to take responsibility for the mentoring relationship.

Transition

The mentee found his first meeting with the university very "scary" and "daunting". He felt lost, knew nobody, and also commented that it was very unlikely that he would meet a familiar person. This created a sense of anxiety and estrangement. He described his arrival as follows: "… hum, at first when we arrived it was very scary." [and later] "It's daunting when you arrive here and you know no one …" The mentee felt at a complete loss.

The mentee was also unfamiliar with the new environment and was not confident about finding his way around the campus. Even attending a lecture became a challenge as the mentee did not know where to go. This is a typical first-year student experience on arrival. The mentees were afraid and their first encounter was critical and it could make or break students.

It was at this point that they needed to find someone who could welcome and guide them and make them feel at home at the institution. They needed to find someone who cared and could help them with the initial transition from high school to higher education. This was the role expected of a peer mentor. The mentee reflected on his encounter with the peer mentor at this stage: "… the mentors really helped us, you know; [they] familiarised us with the area and made us feel at home". This created a positive experience for the mentee, who further remarked that it was good that there was "at least somebody that cares enough to ask, you know, 'How [are] you finding your way [around]; [is] getting to classes okay and that's willing to help you with that". This engagement and assistance by the peer mentor extended beyond this point: "They came weekly, [name of his peer mentor] came weekend and told you know, just to find out how we doing, our experiences, hum, stuff like that." The interest and the caring of the peer mentor gradually extended beyond the immediate needs of the mentee as he started to build the relationship. The mentee emerged from a frightening experience upon arrival and lived through a caring relationship and concluded, "I've been through the experience, so to help someone in that regard would be rewarding."

Self-construction

The mentee was willing to help others who found themselves in a similar position. He could project himself into a future role as a peer mentor and emulate his peer mentor. The transition process came full circle, to the point where the mentee saw himself as the agent of transition for the next intake of first-year students. It seemed as if a culture of caring and support had been established.

It is in this secure and caring environment that the mentee assumed the role of friend. The frightened and lost student reconstructed himself as a friend in the relationship and took on the identity of a real friend in the relationship: "As long as somebody is listening to you and can give you advice, you know you can find real friendship [here]." The mentee could confirm the real closeness of this relationship.

7.2.2.2 Dyadic analysis

Correlation between the descriptive and interpretive levels

Both the peer mentor and the mentee concurred on both the descriptive and interpretive levels that the peer mentor was always available when the mentee needed her. The peer mentor related an incident where a mentee approached her in her (the peer mentor's) '"own time". She responded to the mentee's need and concluded, "I help the [mentee], we spend an hour or two, working on some problems." The peer mentor placed the mentee's need first and assisted him. The mentee corroborated this, stating that "… you can walk two doors down [down the corridor] just go knock at someone's [peer mentor's] door and [the peer mentor] is willing to listen …" The peer mentors were placed in the same corridors as their mentees to increase accessibility. The peer mentor made herself available in her own time and this showed her concern and willingness to sacrifice her personal time.

The peer mentor pointed out that the mentee looked up to her as a role model: "… they do look up to you … you're actually a role model to these kids …" and continued by pointing out that, because of her (the peer mentor), "… they say … 'I want to become a mentor…'". The peer mentor was very clear about the impact she had made on the mentees.

The mentee's response supported the peer mentor's claim by expressing a wish: "… to help someone in that regard [as a peer mentor] would be rewarding". The mentee also understood

the value of the relationship and that both parties benefitted from or were rewarded in the process. This wish to help others was inspired by the benefits received from the mentoring relationship. This mentee's wish also showed that he had the ability to envision himself in a new role in the future. As a result of the peer mentor's experience in the mentoring relationship, she also saw herself in a new role for the future. She saw herself as a lecturer. The capacity to envision oneself in the future and to continue the culture of helping others is an important consequence of the mentoring relationship that is supported on both the descriptive and interpretive levels of the peer mentor and mentee transcripts.

Correlation on descriptive level, contrast on interpretive level

The peer mentor described how she identified with her roots ("I am still a girl from ... the hood") and that it was important for her to remain "one of those guys [mentees]". It was on "that level that [they] chat to each other". This reflected a picture of friendship and being on the same level.

This notion of friendship was clearly expressed by the mentee who could "find real friendship" that was very close. One would expect greater equality in this type of relationship. This was, however, contradicted on the interpretive level. The peer mentor, on more than one occasion made the point that the mentees looked up to her. She clearly felt that she held a higher position. She patronisingly referred to them as "these kids". When the peer mentor related anything to the mentees, she used commanding terms. The mentee said that the peer mentor "… told us …" and "… checked upon us quite often …". The peer mentor took on an authoritarian position that was incongruent with a more egalitarian relationship to be expected in a friendship, a "… give and take type of a relationship", as was expressed by the mentee.

It is important to note that it was only in the dyadic analysis that the true dynamic of the interaction between the peer mentor and mentee came to the fore. Contradictions and similarities that were not always visible on the monadic level could be accessed on a dyadic level. This contributed to the depth of the analysis.

7.2.3 Dyad 3

7.2.3.1 Monadic analysis

Peer mentor

Personal growth

This peer mentor was presented as a more humane and vulnerable person than the previous mentors by the transcription. She also showed a fairly high degree of self-reflection and self-criticism: "I don't think, we [do] not [observe] very high standards and right now I don't think we really living up to that. I think we going into a relaxed mode." She expressed concern that a degree of complacency had infiltrated the programme and even her own practice. She became self-critical and expressed the view that it was "… like me who lost touch with what we are doing".

This critical reflection developed into doubt about her practice: "I don't feel so firmly anymore … I am sure just because of myself, yeah." There seemed to be a sense of being less connected than before, possibly because she doubted her ability. This introspection showed that peer mentors are human beings after all. They also have their own doubts and concerns. This introduced a realistic perspective into mentoring and in my study on peer-mentoring that is often idealistically presented as a panacea. Peer mentors also have problems of their own and difficulties to deal with.

Insufficient time for their own academic work and the expectation to do well were the two critical difficulties peer mentors had to deal with. There was a tension between self-interest and the interest of the mentees. This tension was captured by the peer mentor in the following admission:

> … for next term, I'm dreading it, I even tell [the head peer mentor] that I wish there was a way of not being here anymore without having to feel bad 'cause the thing is I, I put, I'm fed-up with being a mentor this year so I have to be …, I just … okay one thing I'm confident about is that I'd like to spend more time with my mentees. But I have such a hectic week coming up that I am worried about myself first, my schoolwork. I need to get good marks …

The peer mentor dreaded the new academic term to the point where she considered resigning from the programme. She was acutely aware of the (academic) workload and the pressure to get good marks. Her words "I'm fed-up with being a mentor" suggest a sense of despair and

the prospect of resigning created feelings of guilt. However, it was the programme, and more particularly the mentees, that raised her confidence. She was convinced that she wanted to spend more time with the mentees. It was the prospect of spending more time with the mentees that was the only positive sign in this otherwise negative response by the peer mentor. It seemed as if the mentees had become a meaningful component of the peer mentor's life experience. Finally, the way in which the peer mentor dealt with her own negative experiences seemed to affect the mentees. The peer mentor expressed sustained concern for the mentees and she questioned whether she had done enough for them.

The peer mentor raised this concern because she realised that mentoring … meant a lot of extra work". The peer mentor finally remarked, "I've learned to deal with not worrying about doing too much because I think I'm doing great in terms of my mentees." She added that the mentees were "feeling like I am the best person they've ever met … and they happen to do that alright but somehow I see it so exaggerated, I mean, really, yeah they very nice." The peer mentor did not appear to feel completely deserving of the mentees' confidence in her and their opinion that she was the best. However, this response by the mentee contributed to the peer mentor's experience of success and helped the peer mentor to view herself in a balanced way in this relationship. This meant being herself and accepting what she could or could not do. This simply meant that the peer mentor could only do her best:

> I have learned from the programme is that the way you trying always to put your best foot forward. It was all about me try to do everything right but how I usually let myself be myself to that extent that when something does go wrong I can actually say it happened and deal with it, like come out of it up and not down and say gosh.

The peer mentor learned that she could only do her best and realised that she had to accept who she was. She had to accept that there would be times when things went wrong and deal with it accordingly. This was an important maturation that occurred in the peer mentor.

The peer mentor could finally say, "[T]his is me, this is the way that I am doing it." She had accepted the self and had become mature, secure and at peace with the mentoring reality and consequently developed the ability to grow into the role of peer mentor without losing her identity. She still knew who she was and remained true to the self:

> I honestly think it's because I don't try too hard to be, I think it is all about me being myself and not, you know the difference when I'm saying this is just me and this is me the peer mentor.

The peer mentor could distinguish between the roles, act role-appropriately, and remain authentic. This authenticity is indicative of a deep level of growth that had taken place in the context of the relationship. It is this authenticity of the peer mentor that created the openness and mutual acceptance in the peer-mentoring relationship.

Interrelatedness

The peer mentor embraced her humanness and this made her very accessible to the mentees:

> So the fact that they be able to feel comfortable around [the peer mentor] … the fact that I am actually human around them, I'm not try and be a perfectionist who is forever above the level you know, so I think that's what help them out, that's what happen, be able to talk about anything and just relax around them.

The mentees felt comfortable and relaxed; they could talk to the peer mentor about anything because she did not try to appear perfect or to be a perfectionist. This behaviour signalled to the mentees that they did not need to be perfect either. The mentor was human, could understand the challenges of the mentees, and did not assume a position of being "forever above the level" as she put it. This made the mentees feel relaxed in the presence of the peer mentor. The peer mentor reported that "there's times that they [the mentees] feel like … I wanna go tell [peer mentor's name] about my new boyfriend … they [the mentees] so very relaxed around me, so I think it's just being about myself". The mentees talked about their personal lives and relationships. This is evidence of the high levels of trust in the relationship. It also draws attention to the fact that vulnerability can only be dealt with in a safe context such as that afforded by the peer mentor-mentee relationship. Despite the negative experiences related by the peer mentor, she managed to create this safe space for the mentees and helped them to grow. She remarked that their communication was "open, it's so loving, most of them [the mentees] are extremely nice".

The relationship between the peer mentor and the mentee also developed to the point where the mentee could go to the peer mentor's room whenever he needed the peer mentor: "… then they started coming to my room personally without prior notice, just … I need help with this and, yeah, you do help them out …"

The mentee felt free to approach the peer mentor at all times and knew that there would be assistance. The peer mentor went beyond her call of duty. This readiness to serve at all times made the mentee feel accepted, secure and at home.

The peer mentor-mentee relationship was not always a serious one, as indicated by the peer mentor: "[T]he relationship with my mentees is purely light-hearted on everyday level like when I see them every day."

Their relationship became more relaxed and accessible to the mentees. They felt free to approach the peer mentor and also just to be themselves.

The peer mentor also identified another dimension of the relationships, namely that of race and commented as follows:

> There is coloured ones and Xhosa ones which don't join so well, but when we in the meetings together they get on like a house on fire probably they don't join in because they not friends outside of the programme but when they together [in the mentoring context] they make it a point to catch up on each other's life.

The peer mentor did not express any race-related problem on the peer mentor-mentee dyadic level and seemed to be the source that helped the mentees to transcend race in the mentoring context. The challenge for the peer mentor was to help the mentees to replicate the mentoring dyadic and mentee group experience in their everyday lives. She set the example and created the possibility for mentees to transform their perspectives of each other beyond the confines of the mentoring dyad and programme reality.

Although the peer mentor spoke about trying not to be above the level of the mentee, there was at times a clear dividing line between peer mentor and mentee:

> There's times where they know I'm being a mentor when I walk into the room and tell them, 'Listen what you doing right now, you probably might regret."… you know instances like they say like, 'Gosh my sister caught me out.' which is okay.

In these instances, the power differential moved in the direction of the peer mentor. The roles were clearly defined. The peer mentor constructed herself as the big sister who was in control. She remained aware of her role as peer mentor and of being relaxed and just being herself: "[Y]ou know. There is a difference when I am saying this is just me and this is me the mentor." The peer mentor experienced the need to draw a distinction between the two roles. This created a degree of tension while developing a greater degree of equilibrium in the power differential in the peer mentor-mentee dyad. She tried to create a relationship of greater equality: "I am actually being human around them; I'm not trying and be a perfectionist." She did not have an attitude of superiority. The peer mentor seemed to have made a conscious effort to create a greater degree of power sharing in the relationship.

Transition

The peer mentor managed to create a culture of sharing and support in the peer mentor-mentee relationship. She commented as follows:

> If we talked about somebody's problem the previous meeting, they'd ask, 'How did you go with that?' If somebody comes up and says, 'Oh, I am good at that,' and then they help each other out. So they working out pretty well.

This created a sense of belonging and care that is critical to transition from high school to university. It contributed to the mentees' adaptation and success at university. The peer mentor remarked at some point, "I know that my mentees are doing pretty well, I am happy." The mentees followed the example of the peer mentor to support and serve others (mentees). They also developed an interest in each other's well-being.

Mentee

Interrelatedness

The mentee described the relationship with the peer mentor as that between two sisters:

> "… I can say she is like my best friend, my sister because when, when I need help she is always, she is always there, she even told me she's there for 24/7."

The mentee felt secure and knew that there would always be support. The peer mentor was the dominant member in this relationship. The peer mentor was always available irrespective of the time. This is indicative of the high level of commitment and care for the mentee. This availability is a critical element of mentoring and transition. It created a safety net and a sense of security knowing that there was always someone to turn to: "… 'cause my mentor is always there for me' … 'cause she makes sure that everything is fine all the time'". The peer mentor went beyond the call of duty and gave selflessly. The mentee remarked:

> … our mentors are always [there] even at 1o'clock in the morning they always there and they help us like to see what's wrong and what's right, for example people are making a noise in the dorm and they tell us 'Guys, you must think of another person and all that', they help us a lot".

The peer mentor established a culture of caring for each other, of being considerate. This was done by modelling the behaviour and by reminding mentees that they should think of each other. The dyadic relationship became the exemplar for all other interaction at the dormitory.

This caring relationship created a safe space for the members to develop an openness and vulnerability that was embedded in the dyadic relationship. This was a relationship that deepened in trust and became one of reciprocal sharing on a profoundly personal level. The mentee reflected about this relationship in the following way: "… she shares everything with me and then, and then like now we share a lot of things … she even said that to me because she does not have sister and all that yeah. That's a good relationship." This relationship developed to a greater level of equality. The power differential seemed to shift closer to equilibrium, even reaching it in moments of equal sharing.

Self-construction

The mentee reconstructed herself as a sister to the peer mentor. The mentoring relationship became a family relationship, creating an experience of being in a home away from home. This mentoring dyadic experience acted as a vehicle for transition, a way into higher education that was enabling and receptive; it built confidence and a sense of belonging. As a result of this relationship, the mentee experienced some personal growth and development. This growth was also reflected in her becoming a 'sister' who shared personal experiences with the peer mentor.

In this way, the mentee assumed the role of confidant, and thus somebody to talk to. The mentee experienced moments of becoming the significant other for the peer mentor. The mentee extended his role as significant other by claiming the peer mentor. He said that she was his peer mentor and he wanted to protect the peer mentor against abuse by other mentees:

> … and yeah man let's not pressurise our mentors 'cause people are like abusing them even if they don't meet [need] them, they always ask for, 'Where is, is [peer mentor]? Are we suppose to get a mentor because I don't know this [academic work], I didn't know that even if it is not necessary yeah.

The vulnerable first-year mentee developed into a confident person who now assumed the role of a protector. He emerged as a new construction of the self. The mentee now realised his growth. His response was:

> ... uhm, at first I was a shy person, now … I saw another side of me that I can talk with people, I can give advice to people yeah I, I don't know how to put it but I am another person now. That's all I can say.

In the same way that the dyadic relationship was reflected by the communal relationship, this declaration by the mentee, "I am another person." became a reflection of the dyadic

relationship. Through this relationship, the mentee developed and could see and appreciate the value of mentoring. This realisation achieved a deeper meaning in the context of the mentees' willingness to become peer mentors themselves in the future—to help others as they have been helped.

Personal growth

The mentee linked this confidence to the interaction with the peer mentor. The mentee had to confront and overcome his shyness and reflected as follows:

> I didn't understand 'cause we introduced ourselves, all of us in our group and then I was like shy to stand up and talk but then there was that thing that said, 'No man, we all boys and all that, no we can share these things', and then I stood up and then I told them my story back home, that I didn't have many friends, yeah and they the others offering to come up and all that. Yeah, that is when I realised that I am another person now.

The peer mentor created a broader communal, shared experience for the mentees in which the dyad was embedded. The dyadic experience was both reciprocated and informed by this communal reality. Since all the mentees in this group were boys, they were bound in terms of gender, thus raising the issue of gender and peer mentoring. Although this aspect was not a critical focus of this study, it cannot be ignored as a factor in creating a safe environment as the mentee remarked that, "… we all boys … we can share these things". It was only by opening up to others, and disclosing his story that others could respond and, as in this case, accept the mentee. It was through this sharing of himself that acceptance and growth could take place, that he could say, "… that's when I realise that I am another person now" that he was transformed into a new person who was ready to accept the challenges of higher education and transition.

The mentee commended the programme as a result of his experience and relationship with the peer mentor: "… the only thing I can say is I would love it if you guys can keep this going for a long time 'cause it's really help me yeah". The mentee valued the long-term benefits of the programme and repeated the vision that it could benefit those who followed.

The mentee not only grew in confidence and being other directed, but also became forward thinking. The acid test for the mentee's development was his mother's observation when he got back home. The mentee reflected on his mother's response by saying, "… she [my mother] was surprised cause I'm not, I'm not an outgoing person [but now I am], I was like

usually at home, like go to school and come back home and go to school like that, I didn't really have a social life …"

His mother confirmed that he had grown. This is a person who knew him intimately and was even surprised not only that he had changed, but also about the way he had changed. This indicates the transformatory power of the dyadic relationship to effect change. This change also contributed to a successful transition to higher education to the extent that the mentee developed, in his own way, into a significant self ready to become a peer mentor to others in the future.

This transformative nature of the mentoring relationship enhanced the culture of service modelled by the peer mentor and inspired the mentee to make the following resolution:

> I want to help people like they've helped me, yeah, that's basically it 'cause I see it, you tend to see people in the other way like you see a person, you look and then you don't just think this person is like actually this nice person …"

The mentee learned to respond to the needs of others and to see them differently. He could see the good in them, that they were "this nice person". This resolution by the mentee initiated a type of peer mentor succession plan. The dyadic mentoring relationship developed to the level where it could sustain itself and reproduce itself for future programmes. The mentee intuitively understood that the mentees were the future of the programme and the successful transition for those to follow them from high school into higher education.

Transition

This journey of transition starts with making the trip from high school to higher education. The mentee recognised that when they arrived they were at a loss. The peer mentor's help was critical:

> … mentors are like helping us so much 'cause we really come from like back home like in Eastern Cape. We never been to Western Cape so we experiencing lots of things here and they like help us yeah to help us. They like sister and like our guide.

On the first level, the mentee experienced help and support from the peer mentor. The mentee felt strange; it was his first time in the Western Cape. The mentee experienced "lots of things" and was dependent on the peer mentor's assistance. On the next level, the mentee experienced this help as from a sister. The peer mentor was like family, a big sister who cared. This created a sense of acceptance and belonging. It helped with the initial transition to

higher education. It also helped the mentee to feel like a sister and not a stranger. This indicated the high level of dependence at this point. The peer mentor was also referred to as a guide. This is a more detached type of relationship; that is, one of delivering a service but also of showing the way. A guide is someone who is supposed to know the way and to be trusted enough to follow. A person places his safety in a guide and trusts that he will be taken on the proper route. This is the trust that the mentee was willing to invest in the peer mentor-guide—a type of trust, one could argue, that at this stage is evoked through the warm reception, being like a sister, and the mentee's dependence and ignorance.

The mentee recognised that the peer mentor's know-how was informed by her prior experience. It was from this experience that the mentees learned:

> … like academically, socially 'cause they like telling us what happened for them back then 'cause back then they didn't have mentors and all that. Like they telling us what you get when you in varsity and they tell you how to start with like academically, they tell us how to study, you must not put pressure at all. They help you with many things.

The mentors shared both their academic and social experiences about university life with the mentees. This sharing and willingness to open up is crucial to the mentees' learning experience and their own transition to higher education. The mentees also learned how to approach their university experience. They were not to pressurise themselves but had to adopt a more balanced approach to the university experience.

The mentee indicated how the peer mentor, in advising him about university life, emphasised this balanced approach:

> She told me that when you in varsity it's not that we come here to study only, she told me that you coming here to enjoy yourself, your youth life and that you must not only concentrate on your books only, you must have social lives with another thing that there must, you must balance your time, you must have time for studies and time for friends and all that and what else.

Here the peer mentor again assumed the dominant role; that is, of telling the mentee what to do and not to do. The source of this dominance is prior knowledge and experience. This placed the peer mentor on an entirely different level. In this dyad, the peer mentor initially drew on this power to stay in control and make sense of her role and status as a peer mentor. This responsibility, which comes with the mentoring role, as was seen earlier, created a tension in the peer mentor—a tension that was seemingly well managed and not carried over to the mentee as was evident from the mentee's experience in the dyad. The peer mentor thus

managed to support and guide the mentee into the culture and demands of higher education in an effective way.

This the peer mentor did by also assisting with academic work on a micro level. She assisted when, according to the mentee, lecturers did not give enough guidance. The mentee stated that this assistance, "… it's very lovely, she's helping me a lot because our lecturer is like basically … a reader, but she [peer mentor] explains …".

The peer mentor assisted in this way with the transition from schoolwork to higher education academic engagement. The mentee was set up for success in this manner. This was not merely spoon-feeding but an emancipatory, enabling process:

> … *yogh* the way they taught us how to study cause I never thought that's how to get [understand] your books. Now I really know how to study.

The mentee became an independent learner who knew how to study. He became a person who took ownership of the learning process and proclaimed this by saying that he now knew how to do it. The mentee declared himself competent and was ready for university. This academic transition from high school to higher education was concluded successfully.

Finally, the mentee also claimed his voice on a social level. The mentee not only learned to engage with others but also to participate in joint decision-making:

> … we get to decide what I would do—are we gonna plan for the coming weekends and get to give each other turns to come up with a thing, yeah, what you wanna do? Like for example, I come up with the idea that we must get together like Sunday nights and have coffee and share out things, yeah.

The mentee took pride in taking the initiative and presenting his ideas to the peer mentor and the group. This initially shy person, by his own admission, became a confident person with a voice, claiming the space and willingness to take the lead. This transition can, to some extent, be ascribed to the dyadic mentoring relationship as reflected upon by the mentee and analysed in this section.

7.2.3.2 Dyadic analysis

Contrast on a descriptive level and correlation on the interpretative level

The peer mentor started out in a very negative way and expressed doubt about her input in the mentee's life. She also expressed the concern that she might not be spending enough time

with the mentees and reached a point where she felt guilty and inadequate and wanted to resign from the programme. She reflected on her mentoring activity as follows:

> I don't think, we set very high standards and right now. I don't think we really living up to that. I think we going to a relaxed mode … it felt a bit like me who lost touch with what we are doing … I'm fed up with being a mentor this year.

From this reflection, it seemed that the peer mentor had given up on herself, the mentee and the programme. The statement also suggests that there was an apprehension there was also the apprehension, from this text, that the peer mentor would have a negative influence on the mentee. However, from the mentee's perspective it was the opposite experience. The mentee felt that the peer mentor had given them a great deal: "*Yogh*, the way they taught us how to study 'cause I never thought that's how to get your books. Now I really know how to study." The mentee had a very positive learning and enabling experience.

This positive experience extended to the close and very personal relationship developed by the mentee and peer mentor. The mentee experienced it as a type of family relationship, which introduced another facet of this analysis, namely an agreement on the interpretive level.

Correlation on the interpretive level

The peer mentor came to realise that she in fact enjoyed being with the mentees: "… one thing that I am confident about is that I'd like to spend more time with my mentees". This realisation emerged from a text that initially portrayed a very negative and despondent picture of a peer mentor who wanted to resign.

The mentee experienced the peer mentor as a caring person who was always available; a person who did not only want to spend more time with him, but who indeed was always available. The mentee experienced his relationship with the peer mentor as a very caring one and described this experience as a relationship with a 'big sister' who was always there: "… she is there for me 24/7".

This 'big sister' experience is confirmed by the peer mentor's remarks that "… we grew into a close relationship …" and "… then they started to come to my room personally without any prior notice" and finally, "… I know my mentees are doing pretty well, I'm happy".

The peer mentor and mentee comments concurred on the question of availability and spending sufficient time on the mentoring activity. The mentees also felt that they were coping and doing well: "… now I really know how to study". The mentee expressed a sense of independence. There was also a sign that the transition from high school to higher education had started out well. This confirmed the peer mentor's claim that the mentee was doing well.

Contrast on the descriptive level

The peer mentor stated that she was not very well liked or popular ("… I'm not the most favourite person in the group …") but the mentee's experience of the peer mentor was different. The mentee described how he acted on behalf of the peer mentor in an attempt to protect the latter from being exploited by other mentees: "Let's not pressurise our mentors 'cause people are like abusing them even if they don't meet [need] them."

The mentee did not only express a concern but referred to the peer mentor as belonging to them ("our mentor"), thus indicating his feeling of closeness to the mentor. This closeness was echoed by the peer mentor who commented, "… we are very close". Finally, the peer mentor emerged from this relationship in a very positive way and recognised that "… they [the mentees] feeling like I'm the best …" It is at this dyadic level that one can trace the development of the peer mentor from assuming a very negative stance to one of feeling appreciated and wanted.

There was a consistent oscillation in the power differential from complete peer mentor dominance to mentee ascendancy. This reflects instances of disagreement on the interpretive level. The peer mentor assumed a position of dominance: "… you know there is a difference when I'm saying 'this is just me' and this is me, the peer mentor,'". The peer mentor was very clear about her role as peer mentor and being in charge: "… they know I'm being the peer mentor when I would walk into the room and tell them …" and they (the mentees) at times remarked that they were caught out by their 'big sister'. The notion of the peer mentor as a 'big sister' clearly designates a senior position in the family hierarchy and demands respect and recognition.

The mentee related how the peer mentor, who did not have any sisters, confided in her: "… she shares everything with me and then like now we share a lot of things …" The mentee developed his role of confidant into that of protector when he reprimanded other mentees

who wanted to exploit "our mentor" by exerting unfair pressure: "… let's not pressurise our mentors ‘cause people like abusing them …"

The mentee also took part in planning and stated that “we [mentees] get to decide what I want to do …". Ultimately it was still the peer mentor who allowed the mentee to do something. The peer mentor remained the 'big sister' although it seemed as if there was some power sharing or reciprocal assumption of power at different times by the members of the dyad.

7.2.4 Dyad 4

7.2.4.1 Monadic analysis

Peer mentor

Self-construction

The peer mentor seemed to respond to the opportunity to support with a degree of caution: "At the beginning of the year I … got this new challenge … so I told myself that okay I am going to take the challenge …"

She perceived it as a challenge and was willing to assume the role and responsibility of a significant other in this relationship. This was a new understanding and construction of the self. It was through the other in the context of the relationship that she could now become the peer mentor, having a new role to fulfil with its own set of dynamics and expectations. She made this commitment, which showed a degree of determination through her self-talk, "… I told myself …"

The peer mentor adopted a very critical stance towards her role in this relationship and took up the challenge but felt that she was not addressing it sufficiently. Her contention was that she had not resolved the 'problem', thereby construing the issue as a product rather than as process or developmental approach. At that stage, she thought that the problem should have been resolved already in order for her to be entitled to claim success. This view also had an effect on her personal growth.

Personal growth

The perception that the problem had not been "conquered" gave the peer mentor the feeling that she was not entitled to claim any growth:

> I can't say now I've grown because uh I think growing comes with being able to … conquer or not to, to overcome problems that you having. So at the moment I still see myself sitting with the problem, that I haven't done much about it … facing the challenge.

She was being very hard on herself, and set very high standards and expectations, and questioned whether or not she had done enough.

The peer mentor developed an understanding of her own vulnerability and limitations. The realisation that she could not do more than she was already doing generated some tension as it was in conflict with peer mentor-mentee expectations in the context of a peer mentor-protégé relationship. This critical stance facilitated the peer mentor's growth insofar as it helped her to make peace with herself and acknowledge that she had indeed learned something from the relational experience. Acknowledging her limitations, she stated: "Hum, I can't say I'm not comfortable but I've learned that I can't do … it's not in my ability to do everything. I can do certain things."

This sobering experience assisted the peer mentor in accepting herself, and appreciating and embracing the mentee's limitations through her own incompleteness. It was through her own experience that she learned not to be judgmental and to accept that there were things that were beyond her control:

> Hum I've learned that sometimes you, if you see someone … judge the person you say, 'This person is a failure or this person is not doing enough' … I've learned from my own experience that things can happen … I need to try to produce … so that is why I learned not to judge people if things are not going the way … I've learned that.

It is clear that the peer mentor was not always in control of the direction events took despite prior planning. This was a reality check for the peer mentor who now used her own experience as a lens for the observation and sense-making of the mentees' experience. The peer mentor moved from the self to the other. As her understanding of the self increased, that of the other deepened. This was an important contribution that the mentoring dyadic experiences had made towards growth. In this way the other was experienced through the self. It helped to develop a stronger sense of other-directedness in the peer mentor.

Although the peer mentor retained a critical approach, saying that she needed to produce, a positive change was emerging. She felt that she had a positive influence on the mentees:

> Some of the mentees didn't come … those who attended you know … they liked the programme so much but the other part, the other do not attend … I felt bad about it I thought maybe something I need to do, maybe something I am not doing right you know but … I still feel I lift them up.

The peer mentor gave a balanced and realistic view. All the mentees were not equally committed. At a point their behaviour made her doubt her own ability. However, in the dyadic contexts of those mentees who were committed, her self-confidence was restored.

Interrelatedness

The peer mentor determined her satisfaction with the mentoring dyad through the eyes and experience of the mentees: "… everything is going well with my mentees, the relationship being good." She stepped into the shoes of the mentees and became other-directed; using the mentee perspective as the reference point to determine the quality of the relationship. In a sense it indicated a subtle power shift.

The positive way in which she experienced the mentees increased her sense of belonging and valuing her own input in adding quality to the mentoring relationship: "I enjoyed being with them uh and the relationship was good … and you know I was enjoying it a lot … I feel I am at the right place."

The peer mentor enjoyed being in this relationship and experienced a sense of belonging and attachment. She stated that it was the right place for her to be—that is, where she could be of value and could make a meaningful contribution. There was a reciprocal experience of enjoyment and a sense of belonging. This was an important experience in helping the mentees in their transition from school to higher education, from feeling alienated to being accepted, and from fear to enjoyment.

Transition

The peer mentor reflected on the importance of academic support for the mentees and remarked that for mentees it was critical "… if you [the mentee] get more … academics [academic support], it's very important to ask someone to help you … they [the mentors] end up always available …" Availability was crucial to the facilitation of mentee transition. The peer mentor had to be available and approachable when the need arose and the mentees needed to be able to trust her in order to discuss their 'academic needs'. Trust was built as a result of the peer mentor's availability and willingness to help them with their academic work.

She remarked that "… we do discuss their studies you know, how it is and all that stuff, so I think it is much better". After they had discussed the work, it was indeed a lot better for the mentees. This academic support was an important factor in getting mentees to adapt to higher education. It created confidence in the mentees and facilitated induction into the academic culture and practices of the university.

Mentee

Interrelatedness

Mentee 4 described the first encounter with the university as a lonely and alienating one: "… when people come here, the confusion and everything … can be very daunting. University it is not easy for me to find friends ..." First-year students need someone to talk to when there are problems and this mentee remarked that the programme was good because, "at least when you know you have a peer mentor who you can talk to because, I know that I've had problems and I go to my mentor and discuss it with her". It was this open relationship that created the space and opportunity to share his problems that made it possible for the mentee to cope. The mentee felt free to talk to the peer mentor about his problems. This underscores the trust that existed in their relationship. This openness and trust extended to a position where the mentee could discuss anything with the peer mentor: "… we can talk freely. That's basically it; I can do anything with her. I can go with my problems to her, my school [university] problems to her. So it's basically being free."

There was a high level of trust. The mentee could even disclose his personal problems. This was the type of relationship that was safe and accommodating. The peer mentor also created a context or group where mentees could make friends. This helped mentees to deal with loneliness because they [the mentees] "… began to talk about things in a group. So when there were problems, they're problems that you can share with the group …"

In this way, the peer mentor created a culture of sharing and support in the dyad that was replicated in the group. The dyad acted as exemplar for the group. This dyad became the model for both peer mentor-mentee as well as mentee-mentee interaction outside of this experience. It was also in the dyadic context that the culture of support was developed and modelled.

The mentee identified the important elements of attitude and availability in the support provided by the peer mentor. The mentee reflected as follows: "… she is so friendly, she is nice and she place visits for us to be able to talk to her, to be able to connect with her …" The mentee alluded to a sense of connectedness or attachment. It seemed to be more than merely talking to the mentee, but one of belongingness, feeling accepted and being connected. This speaks of a special type of relationship, more than merely peer-mentor and protégé, but one of interpersonal interaction on a deeper level.

Self-construction

The mentee developed his experience of this relationship in familial terms. The mentee remarked, "[M]y relationship with my peer mentor is very good 'cause everything I see her, she is like my mother, she is like another mother that I have here at school [university]." The mentee developed from a lonely person who found it difficult to find a friend, to a person in a protective mother-child relationship. He reconstructed herself as the child in this mentoring relationship. This introduced the dimension of power into the relationship. The power resided with the peer mentor at this point. The mentee referred to his interaction with the peer mentor, in terms of seeking academic support that you have, "… to consult another person that's on another level …" The peer mentor also assumed control of her availability to the mentee. The mentee stated that "she [the peer mentor] places visits for us to be able to talk to her". The peer mentor did the time management at this stage.

The mentee continued to grow and reconstruct himself in the context of the peer mentor-mentee relationship. The mentee asserted that the peer mentor had realised "that I can understand people now … and [that] maybe uhm when people come here, the confusion and everything …" the mentee could handle it. The mentee gradually began to experience himself as becoming competent enough to fulfil a mentoring role. There was a shift in the power differential and a degree of emancipation from dependency. This was a shift for the mentee to discover himself in the peer mentor. This is the process of finding the self in the other.

The mentee now began to reconstruct and envision himself as a future peer mentor. This was a way of finding his own voice and proclaiming that he was ready to become a significant other for new mentees. This wish to assume the role of peer mentor seemed to be primarily inspired by the culture of service and the benefits he gained from the programme and his relationship with the peer mentor. It also demonstrated his other-directedness and vision to

serve. The mentee seemed to have grasped the importance of the reciprocal nature of growth through mentoring. It was not only about the self, but ultimately about the other. This is how the legacy was sustained.

The mentee pointed out that he also had to leave the university at some time but would like to make a contribution by helping others as he was helped, "because I also wanna have to go. When you come here you get so lost, you get so confused and you don't even know who to talk to, so I wanna be there for children [students] coming next year."

The mentee referred to future first-year students as 'children'; therefore he seemed to have already adopted the 'mother-role', a position of power, following the example of his own peer mentor. The mentee expressed his understanding of the plight of the new first-year students and wanted to follow the example of his own peer mentor and role model. The mentee valued his experience from the mentoring relationship enough to want to pass it on to others.

The mentee became future-directed and projected himself into the future as a potential peer mentor. This was also based on his understanding and appreciation of his own capacity to peer-mentor others. He concluded this issue by stating, "[S]o for me it's a very good programme and I like and would really like to join it next year." He envisioned himself as being a peer mentor the following year, thus helping to sustain the programme.

The mentee began to assume the role of the significant other by demonstrating his concern for his peer mentor. He indicated that he understood the role of the peer mentor and the pressure she worked under:

> … as the mentors have a lot a work on their own because it's a lot of work. Maybe you writing letters to your mentees and everything and then you have to focus on the school [university] side at the same time and your books …

Through his insight and understanding, the mentee also developed empathy for the peer mentor and showed concern and compassion. The roles were reversed, power shifted to the mentee, and the mentee became the care-giver. It is clear from the mentee's input that his vision to become a peer mentor was well informed and not a mere fanciful or romantic idea. The quality of the mentoring experience developed and prepared the mentee to take the lead in the future.

Transition

An important element in the growth and development of the mentee was how the mentoring relationship contributed to facilitating his transition to higher education.

The mentee started his reflection on his first encounter by saying that the university was a lonely place, a place where it was difficult to make friends. This was a place very different from school where he had friends and was accepted and appreciated. The mentee was now out of his comfort zone with no one to depend on. There was no camaraderie and support. The mentee moved from being a friend to being what one might refer to as being 'unfriended' in an alien environment.

The peer mentor created the space for connectedness to the campus and helped the mentee to understand and adapt to the university culture. The mentee described his experience as follows:

> … being patient and learning to understand how things happened around, around campus that everything won't come the way we wanted it to be, everything won't turn up ultimately the way we wanted things to be.

The mentee learned to be patient and more realistic about what to expect. The peer mentor showed him how to respond to the new environment and adapt to the university culture. It was about surviving and making the best of the experience. The primary challenge for first year students is to complete their academic studies as this is the core business of higher education.

The mentee reflected on how the peer mentor also assisted him with his academic work:

> … it's helping me very much for the … part and we do the question papers and, and its helping me very much 'cause sometimes you don't know the problems and you find that people that are going with you to class also don't know the problems so you have to consult another person that's on another level … so it's helping very much.

The mentee pointed out how academic support was very helpful. Those that attended classes with the mentee also struggled with the academic context. They needed more experienced people to help them. The peer mentor helped the mentee to cope and develop confidence academically. This was an important facet of the mentee's transition to higher education.

The peer mentoring relationship thus contributed to the mentee's transition to higher education, both through psychosocial relational support and academic guidance and

assistance. The transition also occurred on the level of personal development to the point where the mentee developed into the role of envisioning himself as a peer mentor. He had now become part of the higher education culture, the inside story, to the extent that he could help others to make the transition.

7.2.4.2 Dyadic analysis

Correlation between the descriptive and interpretive levels

Both the peer mentor and the mentee described the relationship as "good". The peer mentor stated that she enjoyed being in the relationship. The peer mentor, on the interpretive level, felt very close to the mentee in this relationship. She developed a deep sense of belonging. After her internal struggle as to whether or not she did enough (see monadic analysis of peer mentor) she arrived at a point where she declared, "I feel I am in the right place." The mentee echoed this sense of belonging and acceptance of the peer mentor in the relationship. The mentee reflected on the relationship in personal and familial terms: "[E]very time I see her she is like my mother, she is like another mother I have here at school [university]." Describing the peer mentor as a mother is a very personal and intimate way of reflecting on the relationship. It is clear that both peer mentor and mentee concurred that the relationship was good and that they both experienced a mutual sense of belonging in the relationship and to one another.

Correlation between descriptive levels

There is also an overlap on both descriptive levels with reference to academic support and availability. The peer mentor understood and expressed the mentee's need for academic support and for someone who was available to assist. The peer mentor pointed out that it was more than only "academics"; it was also important to have support: "… it is very important to ask someone to help you". The peer mentor responded to this need of the mentee by being available and by "discuss[ing] their studies, how it is and all that stuff ..."

The peer mentor also helped the mentee to adapt to the university culture and way of doing things. This helped the mentee to be "patient and learning to understand how things happened around, campus" as remarked by the mentee.

Contrasts on the descriptive and interpretive levels

The peer mentor took a very a critical stance and doubted her availability and contribution to the mentoring act. She reflected on this aspect by saying: "[M]aybe something I am not doing right you know." She responded about her self-development in an equally negative way: "I can't say I've grown because growing comes from being able … I haven't done much about it [the mentoring challenge]."

The mentee had a totally different experience of the peer mentor's interaction with her: "My peer mentor is very good … she is like a mother."

The mentee also felt that the peer mentor did a great deal for him and reminded others that the peer mentor had much work: "… mentors have a lot of work on their own because it is a lot of work." The mentee showed concern and appreciation.

Finally, in referring to her relationship with the mentee, the peer mentor began to identify the positive aspects of the relationship and noted that she "… enjoyed being with them [the mentees] … I was enjoying it a lot … This statement clearly indicates that the negativity that emerged on the descriptive level did not tell the whole story. The peer mentor concluded by saying, "I feel I am in the right place." The mentee confirmed this: "[T]hat's basically it; I can do anything with her. So it's basically being free."

7.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I attempted to present and give a preliminary analysis of the data from two perspectives. First I adopted a monadic perspective, where I presented the data from the positions of both mentors and mentees in turn. The pictures that emerged gave a good indication of the experiences of both parties but did not always do so with reference to the relationship. This occurred especially in the case of reflections primarily from an individuated perspective as represented in the four major themes presented at the beginning of this chapter.

The second level of analysis was conducted on the dyadic level. This followed an approach adapted from work done by Eisikovits and Koren (2010) as set out in Chapter 6.

It was only on the level of the dyadic analysis that I could arrive at a deeper understanding of the mentoring relationship and how it was experienced by the dyadic partners. This approach

was taken to develop a picture of the nature of peer mentoring dyads and the relational impact such relationships have on the relational partners.

Finally, in this chapter I applied the practical framework developed in Chapter 5 to the point of using the four major themes as the lenses for sense-making. In Chapter 8, I take the analysis to another level by adding the theoretical frameworks and the theoretical perspectives incorporated in the practical framework I have developed. I conducted this analysis on the dyadic level. I hoped, in this way, to address the paucity of theoretical frameworks, theory and relational research in peer mentoring in higher education.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

> Qualitative research takes time to constantly review where you are in the research process; what you have accomplished, what you have not accomplished, what challenges you have overcome and what new challenges you may have to deal with in the future. Once I was confident that I had captured my study participants' perceptions, and then I organised, analyzed and interpreted my data. I began writing my findings and observations as I went along. I found that presenting the feelings and perceptions of my study participants can be difficult, especially when you are trying to be an objective observer and recorder of other people's thoughts, feelings and perceptions. Capturing the experiences through the images of your study participants requires good in-depth interviews, accurate transcriptions and unbiased reporting. None of which is an easy task. A well-organised and conducted qualitative study will enable you to make valuable contributions to the literature like these from my study.
>
> Warren Snyder, cited in Lichtman (2013:241)

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The key findings in Chapter 7 clustered around four salient themes, namely interrelatedness, personal growth, self-construction and transition. These themes were distilled from the data. The discussion in this chapter takes place within the confines of the theoretical framework for dyadic peer mentoring as developed in this study. This framework was informed by the selected theoretical frameworks (of social constructionism, relational theory and the philosophy of Ubuntu), the literature perspectives, and the selected psychosocial theories discussed in Chapters 2–5. In the current chapter, the four themes, mentioned earlier, are discussed across the dyads as analysed. Each thematic discussion consists of two parts: first, a reflection on the monadic findings on both the mentors and mentees and, second, a discussion of the dyadic findings.

8.2 MONADIC DISCUSSION ACROSS DYADS

8.2.1 Interrelatedness

Trust

Young and Collin (2004) state that interrelatedness occurs when people come together and they create and share meaning. This interaction constitutes a social intersubjective interaction that is underpinned by the notions of mutuality, reciprocity and equality in the dyadic context. Neuman (2003) emphasises that this interaction becomes meaningful through purposeful engagement by the participants. The findings of the current study support the position that the

engagement must be purposeful, and consequently the mentor-mentee relationship is understood as a purposeful and directed process. Both mentor and mentee must share the responsibility for their relationship and the success of the mentoring that takes place in the dyad (Langer 2010). According to Miller (2003), this willingness to share the relationship responsibility, over and above the openness and the willingness to contribute to the development of the other, creates a relationship that is growth-fostering. Comstock *et al.* (2008) assert that a movement towards mutuality, as opposed to separation, is critical for relationships that encourage growth.

The dyadic relational context creates the space in which this growth takes place. One mentor remarked that affirmation by a mentee had boosted her confidence and made a real difference to her. This is an important response as it indicates the degree to which the mentor responded to the mentee. Stewart and Krueger (1996) point out that a person's willingness to change perception and redefine the self is a function of reciprocity in the relationship. The question posed in Chapter 4 about how members of a mentoring dyad can redefine themselves through the mentoring relationship is answered by this mentor's response. The mentor remarked that the experience of being appreciated and affirmed is made possible in the relationship and that there is an ability to respond openly and with the expectation of growing. It is significant that in this case it was the mentor who was changed by the interaction with the mentee. Fletcher and Ragins (2007) refer to the members of the relationship, in this case the peer-mentoring dyad, as interdependent selves in relation. The authors posit that the notion of the self is fluid, malleable, bi-directional and interactionist. Devins and Gold (2002) note that it is important for the relationship to be intersubjective, fluid and dynamic. It is under these conditions that new understandings of the self and the world can be generated and the dyadic partners can be seen to show personal growth.

All the mentees remarked that they had experienced a deep sense of connectedness. This is consistent with Liang *et al.'s* (2002) argument that the concept of mentoring represents one of the most intense of helping relationships. Jordan (2001) comments that it is natural to seek a connection with others. As this closeness grew in the investigative situation reported on in this study, trust developed that was critical for sharing and support in mentoring relationships. Mentees stated that they could share personal experiences with mentors and, although this brought about vulnerability, they felt secure. This safety was embedded in the connectedness that developed. It is important to note that, in the context of my study,

vulnerability was not perceived as a weakness or threat. It was seen as an opportunity for growth (Jordan 1989) and not as a deficit approach at all.

Time and availability

Time and availability were as two critical issues experienced by both mentors and mentees. Ehrich *et al.* (2004) concur that time is an important resource. Gibney *et al.* (2011) add the dimension of time management, especially by mentees. Mentors were very much aware of their own studies and the consequent time pressures. The mentors, however, sacrificed their own free time to spend hours with the mentees. The mentors went beyond the call of duty. Mentees even approached mentors in their rooms at odd times when they needed help to prepare for tests and other academic tasks. A mentee remarked, "… our mentors are always there even at one o'clock in the morning, they always there." This extended the availability of the mentors, and the mentees knew that there would be help. This made the mentees feel accepted, secure and at home. The mentors experienced a sense of being needed and appreciated, and also commented on the academic success stories of their mentees. These experiences resulted in mentors establishing strong interpersonal commitments that also positively influenced their own performance. They were under pressure to perform well and set an example to the mentees. This developed into a mutually beneficial process underpinned by a sense of connectedness and interdependence. The quality and nature of this interdependence is reflected in a comment made by one of the mentees, namely that the mentor had become more available than his (the mentee's) friends. The mentor was not only present in person, but also in attitude, willingness and competence to assist the mentees to grow in confidence as they gradually became part of the inside story of the institution.

Friendship

The establishment of friendships between mentors and mentees was a noteworthy development that emerged in my study. Pitney and Ehlers (2004) posit that friendship helps to sustain relationships. Friendships are also more egalitarian types of relationships and bring about power shifts and sharing that are important for interdependence and setting up mutually beneficial relationships. In my study, it was evident that the developing dyadic friendships created closeness and a sense of camaraderie and greater equality. Miller (2003) argues that this shift towards mutual power-sharing moves both dyadic partners towards greater effectiveness in the relationship. The establishment of mutually empowering and beneficial

friendships resonates well with Astin (1999), who argues that the level of involvement by students is determined by the students' perception of their locus of control. If they perceived themselves to be effective, their level of involvement would increase and the chances of dropping out would decrease (Astin 1999). Peer mentors, as part of the social system, are critical for the social integration of mentees. According to Tinto (1975), this social integration takes place via friendships, and this also engenders a sense of belonging. My study posits that peer mentoring and these embedded friendships served as a vehicle to facilitate student 'drop-ins'. It is clear from the data presented in Chapter 7 that the actions of peer mentors, through availability, support and friendships, created this drop-in phenomenon for first year mentees. I thus concur with Tinto (1975) that transition to higher education and higher retention does not only require congruence with the institutional climate, but much rather with the social climate as facilitated by friendship. It was evident in my study that mentoring created that congruence and was a critical bridge to higher education for the mentees.

In my study, it was clear that those mentees, who were not only confused and anxious but also lonely, arrived at the university and found in the mentors their first friends. A mentee pointed out that "[a]t university it is not easy for me to find friends …" These mentees needed to have people they could trust and relate to as they were very vulnerable at this stage. My research subscribes the view of Jordan (1989) that relationships and connectedness that are safe transforms vulnerability into an invitation for growth rather than a threat, as previously discussed. This was the experience of mentors and mentees in my research. The mentoring dyad created the safe space for the mutual growth of both mentors and mentees. At the end of the programme a mentee could comment that "at least you know you have mentor you can talk to … I've had problems and I go to my mentor to discuss it with her". Bretherton (1992) refers to this as “secure attachment” (attachment-seeking) which creates a sense of belonging and connectedness that is fundamental to transition and retention (Colvin & Ashman 2010 Scutter *et al.* 2011). My research confirmed the importance of friendships and supportive relationships in which vulnerabilities can translate into strengths as the bedrock for retention and successful transition.

8.2.2 Personal growth

The theme of personal growth is intertwined with that of interrelatedness and has been touched on already. However, novel findings have emerged that shed new light on the peer-mentoring phenomenon.

Accepting limitations as a role model

In the traditional context, the mentoring dyad is viewed as hierarchical, with the mentor in a position of superiority in terms of skills, knowledge and age (Kram 1985; Pitney & Ehlers 2004; Chan 2008). This view sets the mentor up to know everything and to be everything for the mentee in terms of academic and psychosocial support. The mentor becomes a type of super-human being. In my study a different view emerged.

One mentor stated: "[T]he fact that I am actually human around them, I'm not try to be a perfectionist who is forever above the level you know …" The mentor embraced her humanness and understood her limitations, which made it easier for mentees to approach her. This signalled to the mentees that it was all right not to be perfect and that the mentor understood their problems. They could identify with her, which facilitated the process of personal growth. She became a role model that could be emulated. Kram (1985) points out that the ability to identify with a person (in this case, the mentor) is a prerequisite for effective role-modelling to take place.

Some mentors also expressed a sense of authenticity, stating that they knew who they were and that it was not about pretending. One of these mentors expressed this as follows: "I think it is all about me being myself and not, you know the difference when I am saying this is just me and this is me the mentor." Mentors could represent themselves fully and authentically, which enhanced the effectiveness of the relationship (Jordan 2001). The mentoring relationships in my research also became more conducive to growth because of the openness and truthfulness of the mentors (see Jordan 2001; Fletcher & Ragins 2007; Comstock 2008).

Some mentors also realised that they could not always meet the expectations of the mentees and one reflected as follows: "… you cannot please everybody you know as much as you want to, you cannot please everybody and that is the sad reality …" The mentors understood and accepted their limitations. This helped them to cope when they could not meet the mentee and relationship demands or when things went wrong. This was an important reality check

that some mentors made, which demonstrated their authenticity and the growth that had taken place. My research suggests that the level of authenticity of the mentors contributed to the degree of personal growth of both the mentors and mentees in the mentoring dyads.

Becoming attuned to others

The reality check for mentors also confronted them with their limitations. Accepting one's limitations is a celebration of one's humanness and helps to explode the myth that mentoring is a panacea for problems of transition and access for success of first-year higher education students. In my study mentors became more attuned to the 'other' (mentees) and understood and reached out for the 'human' in the other (mentees) (Jordan 1989). One of the mentors stated that, sometimes when she saw someone (a mentee), she would think "… this person is a failure or this person is not enough … I've learnt from my own experience that things can happen …" This mentor in particular reflected the general feeling that she has learnt from her own experience that a person was not always in control and things could go wrong. Mentors used their own experience as lenses to observe and make sense of the mentees' experiences. The other (mentee) was experienced through the self. This is an important dynamic of empathy (Jordan 1989). According to Fletcher and Ragins (2007), this mature expression of interconnectedness is the ability to hold onto the self but also to experience the other's reality. Mentors were first-year students at some stage and could therefore draw on their experience to develop an empathic resonance with the self and the mentees.

As the understanding of the self increases, that of the other (the mentee) deepens. This is an important contribution made towards growth by the dyadic mentoring experiences. It helped to create a stronger sense of other-directedness and openness. The openness of the mentors to express and take ownership of their limitations did not feature in the literature that was consulted in my study. My study thus presents another perspective on mentors in general and peer mentors in dyadic contexts in particular.

The norm is for mentors or mentees to reflect on their lives and indicate, using themselves as a point of reference, that they have grown. In my study, a mentee's mother made him aware of the change that he (the mentee) had undergone. This mentee reflected on his mother's observation when he arrived home for a holiday: "… she [(my mother) was surprise not only that [I] had changed, but also the way in which [I] had changed." This is evidence of the transformatory power of the peer-mentoring dyad. This personal growth of the mentee also

contributed to his successful transition to higher education to the extent that he had developed confidence and was socially integrated (Tinto 1975; Hall & Jaugietis 2011). It should be mentioned that the change was also observed from the perspective of the mother, thus introducing another dimension into the effect of mentoring relationships.

Age difference

The literature on mentoring indicates that an age difference between mentor and mentee is the norm, the mentor being older and wiser (Kram 1985). My research showed a deviation in that, in one instance, the mentor was younger than the mentee. The observation is that the mentee was inspired to growth by the mentor. The fact that the mentor was the younger of the two did not hamper the mentoring that took place. The mentee stated that the relationship with the mentor was good: "… you know she just inspires me as a person …" It can be concluded that the quality of the dyadic relationship was more critical than the age of the mentor. It must be stated that the other-directedness of the mentor in reaching out to inspire the mentee was also an important element of the relationship. Growth is dependent on positive relationships which, in this case through inspiration by the mentor, increased the mentee's sense of self-worth and validation of the mentee (Liang *et al.* 2002; Comstock *et al.* 2008).

8.2.3 Transition

Transition from high school to higher education lies at the heart of my study. Transition is a natural process and forms an integral part of life (Budny *et al.* 2010). All learners have to leave high school at some stage and an increasing number of them move into higher education (Chow & Healey 2008). This transition requires from students to move into a new physical environment, meet new people and adopt a new way of doing. Mentees reflected that their first impressions of a higher education institution were that it was an alienating and lonely place. One mentee responded that university was a place where, "when people come here, the confusion and everything" can be very daunting. Another mentee described his arrival as follows: "[A]t first when we arrived it was very scary … it's daunting when you arrive here and you know no one." The mentees remarked that university was a lonely place and very different from school. These sentiments of the mentees are borne out by the literature (Budny *et al.* 2010; Gibney *et al.* 2011).

My study was located in a university residence. Mattanah *et al.* (2010) posit that residential students experience higher levels of anxiety than those who commute to and from campus. The authors further point out that this transition process can disrupt the social networks of students who have to leave their homes. Hurtado *et al.* (2007) argue that it is essentially the responsibility of higher education to facilitate this transition process. I support these views, as reflected in this discussion, and concur with and Budny *et al.* (2010) and Smailes and Gannon-Leary (2011) that peer mentoring is an effective support structure to bridge first-year students into higher education. The peer mentors are thus the first people to welcome the mentees and help them settle into this new and strange environment. One mentor pointed out that they took "students from the gate to the reception". This can be construed as the initial phase of attachment to mentors and the institution. This initial attachment raised the expectation of support and guidance (Kram 1985), but the mentees were at a loss when they arrived and sought attachment (Bretherton 1992) for security even though mentors had presented themselves as attachment figures (Gormley 2008; Wang *et al.* 2009).

An important requirement for transition is the ability to adapt to the academic programme. Gibney *et al.* (2011) point out that it is precisely the issue of coping academically (and achieving social integration) that is most frequently cited by first-year students as a point of concern. These students seek attachment (Bretherton 1992; Hurtado *et al.* 2007) to get advice and assistance with their academic programmes. The mentees stated that "you have to consult a person who is on another level …". They recognised the skills and knowledge of the mentor and pointed out how the mentors assisted them. They observed that attending classes was not enough as they did not always understand the work unless the mentors assisted them. The mentors helped them to cope, develop confidence and achieve success. The mentors pointed out that as a result of the academic support the mentees actually passed. My study confirmed that developing a success story academically was crucial to the mentees' transition to higher education. After receiving support from the mentors, a mentee proclaimed, "Now I really know how to learn." This mentee, like others, became an independent learner and took ownership of his learning process. The mentees could declare that they were competent and ready for university. The academic integration (Tinto 1975) of mentees and their dedication to and involvement in academic programmes (Astin 1999) materialised in successful transition to higher education. Mentees also learned the skill to involve others at university. It was evident from my research that this ability was also an important survival skill that promoted transition to higher education (Astin 1999).

8.2.4 Self-construction

Mentors and mentees redefine and reconstruct themselves in the context of the mentoring dyad as a generative relationship. From a social constructionist perspective (one of the theoretical frameworks of the current study) this makes perfect sense. Neuman (2003) points out that social life is the intentional product of interacting social beings. Young and Collin (2004) indicate that this interaction is culturally and historically contextualised. The mentoring dyad is bounded and relationally framed. The members of the dyad are interconnected by the process as well as by the reality they socially constructed (Schultheiss 2005).

The mentors and mentees who participated in my study grew in this context and assumed different roles in their dyadic relationship. The following roles emerged from the data: guide, protector, future mentor/mentor, lecturer, friend and family member.

Role as protector

In my study, the mentee grew in confidence and assumed the role of protector of the mentor. He urged other mentees not to abuse the mentor with unnecessary pressure. The vulnerable first-year student developed into a confident and assertive person. This was a phenomenon that had not emerged from the literature explored in this study: it highlighted a turn in the relationship and demonstrated a genuine concern for the other. There are different ways of making sense of this phenomenon. One could explain it following the thinking of Ensher *et al.* (2001), who posit that the perceived cost of and benefits in the interaction determine the sustainability of a relationship. This thinking is underpinned by the social exchange theory of Homans (1958). The view taken in my study is an adaptation of this theory, as argued in Chapter 6, and espouses the notion of social interchange. The members of the dyad are not only co-beneficiaries of the organic process but also co-contributors to the relationship.

One could argue that the degree to which one receives is directly related to the degree to which one gives. Thus mutuality and reciprocity are products of the social interchange. One could additionally explain the action of the mentee as protector as a form of emulation of the mentor and in so doing invoke role-modelling theory as an explanatory base. It is this growth in connection that allows for the fluidity in the relationship (Fletcher & Ragins 2007).

Familial roles

The mentees experienced mentors as being, 'big sisters' or brothers. These roles are more in line with the traditional understanding of Kram (1985) of a relationship of inequality between mentors and protégés. However, the interaction seemed to be less business-like and more empathetic. One of the mentees commented that "they like to help us, yeah to help us. They like sister and like our guide." The relationship is described in familial terms such as 'big sister' and 'big brother'. This introduces a new dimension given the empathetic nature of the relationship. It is not merely a senior big sister-brother person helping an inferior person—one gets the sense of a 'sistership' or brotherhood developing. The mentoring dyad seems to have the qualities of a family relationship. The mentor also assumes this role, which creates the experience of a sense of belonging and integration in a familiar type of social structure—the family. This is critical to transition as social integration brings about confidence and growth for mentees (Tinto 1975). It is also in this dyadic familial and safe space that the social interchange takes place that prepares mentees for deeper commitment and involvement. The family metaphor extends into mentors being perceived as parental figures to which mentees attach themselves (Gormley 2008; Wang *et al.* 2009). A mentor reflected on the newfound role of mother as a critical space within which personal growth took place.

The parental metaphor is extended to one of family. The dyadic communal space is extended to the broader community which is constructed by the mentee as family. This resonates with the African notion of extended family and the notion of 'my sister or my brother by another mother'. It was within the context of the dyadic 'community' that both the mentee and the mentor defined and processually redefined themselves. There had been a gradual development from anxious first-year student to confident protector of mentor and well-integrated family member by the mentee. The mentor stated that it was actually an achievement to be part of a 'family'. This indicated the mentor values and acknowledged the importance of family. The mentor had become part of this extended family. At one stage, the mentee redefined himself as a son and found safety and security. The relationships of mother-sibling or that of siblings created a sense of familiarity and the mentees were no longer strangers in a strange and alien place.

Future roles

Both the mentors and the mentees developed a future vision of themselves resultant from their growth in the dyadic interconnectedness. One could possibly talk about the peer-mentoring dyadic imagination. The mentee experienced himself as becoming competent to mentor others. He stated that his mentor had said that he (mentee) could understand and help others. He envisioned himself as a future mentor. The mentee understood the importance of helping others and seemed to have grasped the importance of being other-directed. This is how mentoring can become a sustainable practice in higher education. This envisioning of becoming a mentor is also an emulation of the mentor. This demonstrates the power of role-modelling (Welsh & Wanberg 2009). The mentee had claimed the dyadic space and was fully integrated and ready to pass on the experience gained as a mentee: "I want to be there for children [students] coming next year." The mentee had already assumed an adult role and was ready to support the new first-year students. His integration was complete and he was ready for a deeper involvement.

Mentors also projected themselves into the future. They envisioned becoming lecturers and were confident that they could serve the institution in this capacity. The mentee stated that the mentoring experience had made it possible for them to envision themselves as mentors. There seemed to be a link between the mentor's ability to project herself into the future and the mentee's ability to do the same. I invoked role theory to explain this phenomenon in my study because of its explanatory power and its ability to reflect the generative power of mentoring dyads.

Spirituality

Finally, mentors also introduced a spiritual dimension into their reflections. One mentor noted that she felt blessed by her interconnectedness with the mentee. The dyadic space created a spiritual experience. Another mentor suggested that becoming a mentor had come about possibly because of a higher power at work. He stated, "I believe everything was for a reason." A mentee observed how his mentor would read from the Bible and then bless him in one way or another. Only one referred to the spiritual dimension of mentoring. This took the relationship to a deeper level of commitment for both mentor and mentee.

8.2.5 Procedural issues

Transition into the culture of higher education is also critical for first year students. This culture would include both academic and social aspects. Tinto (1975) argues that first-year students needed to be socially integrated as a crucial process to prevent dropout. A noteworthy development, though, is not only the way in which mentees adapted to the institutional culture but also how they extended and contributed towards it. It seems clear from the discussion on the dyadic experience thus far that mentees co-created and co-owned these dyadic experiences. A development not reported on in the literature consulted was that the mentees had transferred their culture of caring and other-directedness to their own lives and future expectations of helping first-year students the following year. They wanted to share their experiences by supporting the new cohort. The mentees also transferred the culture of caring to other students in the residences. The mentees observed that when there was noise in the dormitories, the mentor would remind them to think of others. They then started to behave accordingly. The dyadic culture was transferred into the broader life of the mentee, and the dyadic experience became the exemplar for all their other interactions.

8.3 DYADIC DISCUSSION ACROSS DYADS

In the last part of this discussion I focus on examples of contrasts on both descriptive and interpretive levels and also between descriptive and interpretative levels. I take the view that contrasting understandings and differences between dyadic partners are to be expected. The dyad consists of two individuals who have their own personal and unique histories and experiences of the relationship. The existence of these different experiences is widely recognised (Thompson & Walker 1982). Mentoring is a social act (Lavee & Ben-Ari 2007) and the perceptions of the dyadic partners were shaped in a relationship where there was mutual influence by the partners as well as by internal relational processes. This unique and shared experience is what Eisikovits and Koren (2010) refer to as an experience of 'we-ness' which includes emotional attachment that creates a dyadic meaning of existing in the world. In this section, I explore the intra-dyadic patterns in the instances of seeming contrasts to get a view of the hidden reality of the sub-textual and interpretative levels (Eisikovits & Koren 2010). These contrasting reports may thus reveal the insights of the interplay between the dyadic partners (Julien *et al.* 1992) and reveal how these partners mutually influenced each other's feelings, actions and thoughts (Karney *et al.* 2010).

8.3.1 Contrasts on the descriptive level

Example 1

The first instance of disagreement was where a mentor described her mentoring as inadequate. She felt that she did not live up to her expectations of the self and possibly those of the mentee and had "lost touch with what we [the mentors] are doing". The mentee, on the other hand, had had an extremely positive experience and even felt that they had a "type of family relationship" with the mentor.

The self-critique was inspired by the other-directedness of the mentor. She was greatly concerned by the nature of the help rendered to the mentee. This feeling of inadequacy was a manifestation of her vulnerability. I concur with Jordan (1989) who refers to vulnerability as an opportunity for growth in the contexts of relationships. The mentor engaged with the mentee who experienced the relationship as being very satisfactory. The needs of the mentee in terms of academic support were met: "Now I really know how to study." This positive impact on the mentee created an experience of intimacy for the mentee who described the dyadic space as a family relationship. Thus, in the context of the mentee experience, this satisfaction with the relationship can be explained as need fulfilment (Berscheid & Reis 1998).

Karney *et al.* (2010) note that when partners feel intimately responded to, even in awkward or in this case vulnerable interactions, they tend to be responsive to their partner's needs and experiences. The mentor was affirmed by the mentee's response. She (the mentor) later reinterpreted this relational experience and found new meaning for and in herself. The mentor reconstructed herself and thus found the self through the other (the mentee). It was through the positive feedback of the mentee about the mentor's involvement and support that the mentor could now assume a stronger position as a role model. There was also a mutual understanding of the familial relationship to the point where the mentor acted as the 'big sister' who was always there. The mentee could say, "… she is there for me" and the mentor could reply, "I know my mentee(s) are doing pretty well, I'm happy." The mentor found herself through the mentee and developed trust, which is a critical element of a meaningful relationship (Comstock *et al.* 2008). This trust brought about a commitment to be there for the mentee and to put the interests of the mentee ahead of self-interest (Liang *et al.* 2002; Karney *et al.* 2010).

Finally, both parties sought positive attachment and the mentee became more academically integrated in terms of newfound competencies to study independently.

Example 2

In the second example of contrast on the descriptive level, the mentor claimed that she was not the best liked of people: "I am not the most favourite person in the group." The mentee, however, responded in a totally different way. The mentee acted on behalf of the mentor and told other students not to exploit the mentor but to respect that the mentor was also very busy. The mentee was protective and felt close to the mentor. The mentee reciprocated the protection and support given to him by the mentor. In the context of this study I posit that it can be explained through social interchange that is inspired by intimacy, support and commitment. The mentor had given so much to the mentee that the mentee reciprocated by 'protecting' the mentor. The mentee expressed empathy towards the mentor, which led to the development of caring in the relationship. The mentor responded by acknowledging that "… we are very close …" and stated that the mentee(s) felt that she (the mentor) was the best. It was through these relational processes that I could explore the hidden dyadic realities and arrive at a better understanding of peer-mentoring dyads. Through this deeper mutual attachment and social interchange both dyadic partners found the self in and through the other, as proposed in the Ragins and Verbos (2007) conception of interdependent-self-in-relation. The mentoring relationship developed into a growth fostering relationship that not only enhanced personal growth and relational development but also developed mentee capacity to make the transition to higher education.

8.3.2 Contrasts on the interpretive level

There were instances of contrasting reports on similar issues between mentor and mentee reflections.

Example 1

There was a contrast between the mentor's and the mentee's interpretation of their relationship in terms of power. The mentee experienced the relationship more on an egalitarian level and talked about events that he could host; acknowledging that they (mentor and mentee) were very close and that they were friends. These perceptions, on the monadic level, seemed to indicate a fair degree of egalitarian status of the mentor-mentee relationship.

This was not the case when I explored the mentoring relationship on a dyadic level. The dyadic reality indicated three types of relationships, namely instructor-instructee, mentor as mother/big brother/sister- and mentee as child/younger sibling, and guardian-minor. All these are relationships that indicate dependency.

In the first instance, there were strong overtones of the mentor giving the mentee instructions and opposing the mentee's volunteering to do things and taking control. Secondly, the mentor was referred to as a 'mother or big brother/sister. These roles were assumed by the mentor not only as caring ones but also as authoritarian roles. The mentor checked on the mentee and it seemed clear from this action that the locus of control resided with the mentor. The third position was similar to the second one and here the mentor was referred to as a guardian. Here the mentor made the point that the mentee looked up to her. This created emotional distance and seemed to entrench power for the mentor. The mentee responded by saying "She told us" and "She checks on us"'. This response depicts a relationship of inequality. On the monadic level there seemed to be greater equality compared with that which I found on the dyadic level. In this type of asymmetric relationship represented on the dyadic level the mentor exerted more influence than the mentee (Karney *et al.* 2010). The asymmetrical nature of the relationship was determined by the social role assumed by the mentor (traditional understanding of mentoring: Kram 1985) and possibly by her approach (she referred to mentees as "kids" and she talked down to them). The mentor also used age ("You know my mentees are younger than me") as a source of normative power and authority.

Example 2

The mentee's description of his relationship with the mentor as one of friendship was informed by her (the mentor's) availability. The mentee could talk to the mentor. The mentee experienced the relationship as being very close and the mentee could trust the mentor. The trust that the mentee experienced on the dyadic level (see theoretical framework for peer mentoring developed in Chapter 5) deepened the level of attachment and consequently rendered the mentee more willing to be influenced and to look up to the mentor (Karney *et al.* 2010). Trust also brought about greater closeness (Jordan 1989 Ragins & Verbos 2007). Mentees described this closeness as friendship. The mentees chatted with mentors and, in consequence of this closeness and trust, opened up to the mentors. In relationships with an unequal power differential the more powerful member of the relationship is less willing to disclose anything. The less powerful member, in this particular dyad the mentee, had a higher

incidence of self-disclosure (Wanberg *et al.* 2007). I found that this disclosure created a sense of closeness and intimacy in the mentoring relationship and created a greater sense of attachment that was critical for acceptance and transition into higher education. The mentees were affirmed by the mentors' responses and they (the mentees) developed a sense of belonging and discovered 'real friends'.

The mentors also assumed the position of role model as the mentees looked up to them for guidance. The mentees could envision themselves in the mentors' role, which created intimacy and a form of identification with the role models. Identifying with the role models facilitated the transition as the mentees now followed the behaviour patterns set by their successful mentors. The mentees reconstructed themselves as successful students and became acculturated, which facilitated social integration and promoted transition as the mentees entered into the university culture, both socially and academically.

8.3.3 Contrasts on both the descriptive and interpretive levels

I approached the discussion of the contrasts on both the descriptive and interpretive levels by considering the dyad as the intersection of the vantage points of the mentors and mentees in their reflections on their dyadic experiences as represented in the theoretical peer-mentoring model developed in Chapter 5.

Example 1

The mentor initially described her performance as a mentor from an individuated perspective. It was about 'I'. The description did not reflect on the interaction with the mentee but rather on her contribution to the mentoring act. The mentor experienced herself as one who had not done enough. She approached her personal growth only from a personal one-sided position without holding on to the dyadic relationship as a mutual social act. The mentor thus reflected on the self without considering the mentee and lost the relational aspect. It is only in relation to the other that the self makes meaning; therefore, I contend that the mentor's reflections did not give the full relational picture—hence the contrasts.

The mentee, on the other hand, assumed a relational perspective. He described his experience from the perspective of the mentor: "My mentor is very good." This disposition of the mentor constituted a positive experience for the mentee. The mentee felt intimately responded to and called his mentor a 'mother'". This enhanced the attachment, which facilitated social

integration. I argue that the perspective taken and the frame of reference of both the mentors and the mentees contributed to the contrasting descriptions of their relational experiences.

It was only when the mentor assumed a relational perspective that her understanding of herself changed radically. The mentor then shifted focus and looked at the self from the perspective of the mentee. The mentor stated that she enjoyed being with the mentee. The mentee's engagement influenced the mentor's experience. The mentor reached a point where she felt that she was at the right place. There was attachment to the place, which was really the relational space and not a physical place. The mentor reconstructed herself as a meaningful person in the relationship and consequently for the mentee. This reconstruction process can be described as the mentor finding herself through the mentee (the other). Jordan (1989) explains this inter-relational development of the self through the other as the co-authorship of partners in a relationship. I extend this notion to mentors and mentees as they co-author each other's lives in the dyad in the process of scripting mentees into the inside story of higher education. This integration into the university script also required greater involvement: by following the mentor role model, they started a new chapter in their lives through making the transition to higher education.

8.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I explored mentoring from a dyadic perspective and attempted to explain the reflections of the dyadic partners in a relational context. The position I took was informed by social constructionism, relational theory and the philosophy of Ubuntu as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 and expressed in the theoretical framework for peer mentoring in higher education developed in Chapter 5. Where appropriate, I also drew on the explanatory power of the psychosocial theories discussed in Chapter 5 as incorporated into the theoretical peer-mentoring framework developed in this study. I acknowledge that the mentors and mentees made decisions and acted in specific ways because of their individual frames of reference but also, as designed in my research, as a result of the relationship between them.

Their actions resulted from a combination of the actions and behavioural intentions of both partners in the dyad (Karney *et al.* 2010). The centrality of dyadic relational experiences and the acknowledgement of the mutual interdependence of partners in mentoring lie at the heart of my discussion in this study.

Finally, the mentoring dyad was constituted as the pathway to higher education. and I posited that a monadic approach would be inadequate to explain the mentoring process satisfactorily. I therefore took the dyadic analysis route as the most appropriate way to explore mentoring relationships in the context of my study. I had to develop a method to explore the relational processes in the mentoring dyads as explained in Chapter 6 in an endeavour to make a meaningful contribution to the literature on peer mentoring in higher education. The next and final chapter concludes my study by presenting a critique and a discussion of the implications resulting from the current study.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

"What we call the beginning is often the end and to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from."

(Eliot 1974:2008)

"Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold."

(Yeats 64:2008)

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a broad overview of the field of study and reflects on the conclusions drawn from the research. It distinguishes between factual and conceptual conclusions and then presents the contributions that emerged from my study to the field of peer mentoring in higher education. This is followed by my reflections on a critique of my research. I conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of the implications for future research possibilities emergent from my study.

There is a serious crisis in higher education in South Africa around the issue of low completion rates at institutions of higher learning. I indicated in Chapter 1 that the completion rate of 17% at South African universities is one of the lowest in the world and that this state of affairs is exacerbated by a very high drop-out rate in the first year, especially during the first six weeks. Arguably, this is the critical period for transition from high school to university.

First-year students fresh from high school are confronted with a number of challenges during this critical period. The first challenge is brought about by the fact that students leave the known environment of their social networks and enter into an alien and lonely university environment. Metaphorically, this alien university environment resembles a multiversity of what operates like culturally intersecting crossroads. Students are also confronted with psychosocial challenges such as the need to belong, the need for friendship, and the challenge of getting connected to the university environment and its culture. Undoubtedly, first-year students have academic needs. My research indicated that, if these needs are not addressed, there will be a perpetuation of the negative picture of a high drop-out and failure rate of first-year university students. Such a situation would pose a serious threat to South Africa, a

country that is in the process of building a democracy for economic inclusion in a context of a shortage of high-level skills, limited resources and broad-based pressure of mass poverty and unemployment alleviation. My study has indicated an increase in mentee confidence, study skills and a claim to have done better academically. The mentees who participated in my research developed a positive stance towards the university and their academic work. This is a small but important contribution towards improving retention and access for success by first-year students.

I support the position that it is the responsibility of higher education to address the challenges of transition and to take cognisance of the fact that a number of universities have tried a range of potential responses, including peer tutoring, caring communities, academic involvement and supplemental instruction to do so. Mentoring at a wide range of institutions of higher learning has emerged not only as an effective practice but also as one of the practices of choice to address first-year challenges and enhance the academic attainment of first-year students. My peer-mentoring dyads endeavoured to enhance and enrich the experiences of first-year mentees through peer mentoring and in this way facilitated transition and improved the mentees' attitude and confidence that translated into their experiences and claims of success.

In the theoretical perspectives, I identified the concern that mentoring research is very seldom underpinned by a theoretical base or framework and that there is a paucity of investigations of peer mentoring located within a complex and mutual relational context. My study has attempted to address an apparent over-reliance on single perspective (of either mentor or mentee) studies in mentoring research by adopting a relational approach both in design and analysis.

The topic of this research was informed by the crisis in higher education, with specific reference to the critical period of transition from high school to higher education. My study follows Terrion and Leonard (2007) who raised the concern that first-year students find it very difficult to adapt to university. I therefore undertook to explore student development in the context of a first-year residentially based student-mentoring programme. In response to the lacunae discussed in Chapter 1, my research adopted a social constructionist and relational approach, as well as aspects from the African philosophy of Ubuntu. My study was thus located in the field of higher education as this is the primary context of the programme and the crisis as discussed. The selection of the topic (peer mentoring), field of study (higher

education), and theoretical framing of this research therefore seemed to be topical, relevant and necessary.

I adopted a case study approach and collected data from eight individual interviews representing four peer-mentoring dyads. The dyad was adopted as the unit of analysis in response to the dearth of bi-perspective mentoring and peer-mentoring research in the complex relational context of these areas. The type of research data that represented the perspectives, attitudes and emotions of the dyadic partners demanded a dyadic analysis embedded in an interpretive approach. The data analysis primarily followed an inductive route. Trustworthiness was pursued by using authentic data and triangulating peer-mentor, mentee and peer mentor-mentee (dyadic) texts that represented their lived experiences and perspectives from their individual and joint vantage points. In the next section, I reflect on the factual and conceptual conclusions and implications that resulted from these perspectives and research findings.

9.2 CONCLUSIONS

In my research, I drew a distinction between factual and conceptual conclusions and structured these along the major themes to maintain a sharper focus and at the same time act as a container mechanism for internal coherence.

9.2.1 Factual conclusions

Conclusions related to mentoring relationships, personal growth, self-construction and transition are discussed in the sections that follow.

9.2.1.1 Peer-mentoring relationships

Peer-mentoring is essentially a relationship that creates the context within which the mentoring act takes place. In my study, the initial attachment of mentees to the university took place in the context of the peer-mentoring relationship. This reciprocally influential relationship played a crucial role in the lives of mentees as well as peer mentors. The caring approach of the peer mentors and their willingness to make themselves available at most times made mentees experience a sense of feeling secure, accepted and valued. The mentees reciprocated in all instances by valuing the input of the peer mentors, showing recognition and affirming them for their support. The peer mentors responded by moving from a self-

individuated position to being other-directed. The mentees reciprocated and some became protective of their peer mentors. The recognition afforded to peer-mentors by mentees had mentees emulating peer mentors as role-models. The peer mentors acted authentically. Some peer mentors stated from the outset that they were from the same background as the mentees, which accounts for the sense of social responsibility that the peer mentors developed. The closeness in age and background enhanced the credibility of peer mentors as effective role models.

On a more personal level, the relationships developed roles of peer mentors perceived as 'big sisters', brothers or mother figures. Peer mentors referred to mentees as their 'children'. The mentees started using these familial terms in response to developing a sense of belonging to an extended family. The integration into the university therefore seemed to have happened through the establishment of an extended family structure. The strong sense of putting the other first in the context of an extended family raised the notion of Ubuntu (‘because you are, I am’). This could also explain the high degree of trust in the relationships, which facilitated mutual disclosure and a transformed a sense of vulnerability from a potential weakness into a strength. It is through this repositioning of vulnerability that disclosure and the sharing of personal information could take place, embedded in trust and a strong sense of Ubuntu.

9.2.1.2 Personal growth

I follow Chow and Healey (2008), who posit that making the transition from high school to higher education can be positive and can offer opportunities for personal growth. My study indicated that these opportunities can be exciting and can give students invaluable insights into their lives and what they can potentially become. It is important in a country in transition—in this case, South Africa—for students to be exposed to and experience these opportunities to the full. The factual conclusions I drew from the findings on personal growth covered opportunities for personal, skills and spiritual development.

Both peer mentors and mentees grew in self-esteem as they developed a greater sense of mutual acceptance and achievement. This belief in the self resulted in peer mentors becoming more focused on their mentoring roles and becoming more purposeful about their own studies. They did not want to perform badly, and at times this created much tension and stress. The important point is that they felt driven to be good role models. Mentees reciprocated and, as their own self-esteem increased, they felt more confident to emulate their

peer-mentor role models and began to approach their academic life with greater confidence. This translated into academic success as reported by the mentees.

Mentee confidence was also shown by their increased participation and taking of initiative and control. The mentees started increasing their participation in the programmes and taking the initiative to introduce topics and activities. Some mentees also reported that they 'protected' their peer mentors from abuse by other mentees who did not have sufficient regard for the time constraints and privacy of the peer mentors. There clearly seemed to be power-sharing in terms of controlling how the mentoring unfolded. In some instances, peer mentors also opened up to mentees. These disclosures, which resulted in mentees assuming the roles of peer mentors and becoming a significant other for the peer mentors, provided an example of the reciprocal nature of the peer-mentoring dyad and the way it manifested itself in my study.

I also found that some peer mentors and mentees developed spiritually. Some peer mentors reported mentoring as a spiritual experience. This also had an impact on the mentees who experienced a spiritual dimension in their interaction with the peer mentors. A peer mentor ascribed the fact that she became a peer mentor to a higher power at work. This is a finding that testifies to the spiritual power of peer mentoring which, like family, can be an important anchoring and supporting structure for people. These support bases are especially important in relationships and transition as they inform and reveal how each individual constructs his or her personal reality to make sense of the world and adapt to new people and situations.

The final discovery in terms of personal growth deals with the development and honing of personal skills. Both peer mentors and mentees commented that they had developed communication skills, time management skills and effective study skills. My research clearly showed that peer-mentoring relationships created the space within which communication skills were augmented and the voices of the peer mentors and, in particular, those of the mentees could be heard. This is an important finding that fed into the confidence and personal reconstruction of both peer mentors and mentees as reported earlier. Time management was reported as a problem area by the peer mentors in particular. The relationship demands and engagement helped both peer mentors and mentees to improve their time-management skills and to be more mindful of the value of time. This helped to increase the mentors' and mentees' commitment to their academic programmes, an aspect that was also inspired by the reciprocal mentoring relationship, and served as motivation for both parties to do well. In my

study, reciprocity manifested itself as positive social interchange which mutually benefitted both dyadic partners.

9.2.1.3 Self-construction

My study showed that confidence was also important because it helped the peer mentors and mentees to reconstruct themselves as they grew and developed through the peer-mentoring relationship. As already indicated, the mentees in particular became decision-makers and they started taking ownership of their responsibilities and challenges in the peer-mentoring relationship. They even acted as peer mentors for other mentees, and as confidants and protectors for their peer mentors. Some mentees indicated that they would like to be peer mentors in the future (the following academic year), while a number of peer mentors imagined themselves pursuing postgraduate studies and becoming lecturers in the future. They developed the capacity to construct and project themselves into future roles. In the context of the immediate peer-mentoring relationship, peer mentors constructed themselves as 'big sisters', brothers, mothers or fathers. Adopting the roles of these figures of authority and caring, they guided and nurtured the mentees. This set up an extended family structure with which the mentees seemed to identify strongly. In my research, I refer to this phenomenon as an Ubuntu context which facilitated a deeper sense of reciprocal commitment, availability and awareness of the other. This, in turn, translated into a real sense of belonging and social integration which is critical for success at institutions of higher education.

9.2.1.4 Transition

All first-year students have to undergo the transition from high school to a higher education institution. This can be an alienating and disruptive process, since first-year students are dislodged from family and community support structures and they have to form new attachments to a strange physical environment (the particular higher education institution) as well as the human environment (people). My research included the critical period of six weeks when the students were particularly vulnerable. Peer mentoring was applied to facilitate the transition. My study indicated that especially the peer-mentoring dyads provided a new substitute support structure that enabled the transition and helped mentees to manage this critical period. The dyad created a mutual growth-fostering relationship that developed into a strong sphere of positive influence and support that made the transition more

manageable for mentees. Peer mentoring, in my study, was therefore not merely a mechanism for transition, but a process for organic growth.

9.3.2 Conceptual conclusions

In the subsections that follow I reflect on concepts and theoretical understandings that have emerged from my study as these relate to peer-mentoring relationships, personal growth, self-construction and transition.

9.3.2.1 Peer-mentoring relationships

The peer-mentoring relationship provided the context for the discovery of meaningful interaction between the dyadic partners in my study. In the literature, change is normally attributed to peer mentors, mentees or both in their individual capacity as they fulfil these roles. I explored peer-mentoring through a dyadic analysis which led me to a better understanding of the reciprocal causality of the peer mentor-mentee interactions. I therefore concluded that the peer-mentoring relationship itself also operated as a third locus of influence. Change can be attributed to the relationship as borne out by my study.

In the context of my exploring the mentoring relationship from a dyadic perspective, the notion of Ubuntu ('because you are, therefore I am') emerged as a pronounced feature and insight from my study. The dyadic partners developed an understanding of themselves and each other through the experience of their relational connectedness. This process manifested itself in the selfless way both partners affirmed and invested in each other and in the relationship. This caring, as an element of Ubuntu, further contributed towards the enrichment and extension of the university culture, which was initially experienced as alien. The university culture, in the context of the programme and contiguous activities, was gradually transformed into one that was conducive to growth, acceptance and belonging. A university culture of Ubuntu emerged from the mentoring relationships.

The dyadic partners were sensitised to each other’s needs. There developed a culture of service to others through being more other-directed and sensitive. It was mainly through the dyadic approach that peer-mentoring as a process of conscientization emerged. I thus present the notion of peer-mentoring conscientization as a conceptual conclusion.

The peer mentors and mentees both used familial terms such as 'mother', 'big brother' and 'sister' in referring to their relationship to each other in the dyadic context. The concept of family was consistently used across all the dyads. This recreation of a family context became a substitute support network for the support networks that were disrupted and sometimes ruptured when first-year students left their homes as they came from afar to join the university. The peer-mentoring relationship thus became a conceptual space of nurturing and growth. I conclude that this space assumed that of an extended family infused by a spirit of Ubuntu.

The notion of availability was very prevalent in the data. Initially, it was about mentor availability. As the relationship developed, reference was made to mentee availability to peer-mentors. The peer-mentors were always available to the point of sacrificing their personal time to help mentees. This was a clear demonstration of other-directedness. The two important insights that developed in terms of availability are the mutuality that characterised it and the quality of the availability. Firstly, the mentees became available to peer-mentors, which indicated a reversal of both roles and expectations. Secondly, it is important to note that the quality of the availability that was shared in the relational space psychologically, academically and socially did not only refer to being available merely physically. Rather, it reflected the availability in the shared spaces of commitment and trust to serve the common interest of both parties to do well.

The notion of trust enjoyed high currency in the reflections of both mentors and mentees. It created the conceptual space within which both peer mentors and mentees could express and convert their vulnerability into a strength that enabled open sharing and consequential growth and healing. I regard the manifestation of vulnerability as a strength in the context of the peer-mentoring relationship as an insight that created new possibilities for both dyadic partners and the relationship. This feature of the relationship made power-sharing possible.

Most of the literature consulted presented mentoring and peer-mentoring in a very positive light, reporting few if any problems. Mentoring and peer-mentoring are presented as a sort of panacea to all the problems of novices in different contexts. My research, however, also presented the experiences of inadequacy. Peer mentors were able to indicate their own shortcomings as well as those of the relationship. This brought some balance and a sense of reality to an otherwise litany of praises.

Friendship is yet another concept that emerged from the research. It initially presented a kind of tension between the roles of peer mentor and protégé-mentee. However, in my research, friendship was found to be embedded in the notion of Ubuntu and made role-switching possible with minimum tension around power. This created the possibility of greater equality in the relationship.

9.3.2.2 Personal growth

Power is discussed as a concept emergent from my research as it relates to personal growth. Power-sharing featured as a manifestation of growth as mentees were able to take control, responsibility and make decisions and commitments. It also contributed to the role the participants assumed in the relationship. Power thus featured as an enabling experience. This understanding of power as an enabler of growth for mentees presents a view different to that portrayed in the literature where mentees are objects of the peer-mentoring act.

Mentors and mentees conceptualised themselves as persons with power as the relationship developed and they began to act accordingly. Power, as regulated by the relationship, gradually showed a tendency for balance between the dyadic partners. This power-sharing created the space and possibility for the dyadic partners (especially the mentee) to grow in confidence, to take the lead in the relationship, and face the challenges of transition.

This confidence resulted in the mentee (as well as the mentor) growing from independence (an individuated self) to interdependence (other-directedness) which constituted a notion of the other as a co-determinant of the self. This accentuated an other-directedness that facilitated reciprocity of benefits and set up a growth-fostering relationship.

Both dyadic partners reflected on the mentoring relationship as a spiritual experience. The emergence of a spiritual dimension in the mentoring relationship presented a novel dimension of peer-mentoring relationships for transition, since mentoring is primarily discussed as a function or mechanism employed by the institutions of higher learning as in the case of my literature perspectives.

9.3.2.3 Self-construction

The dyadic partners discovered new dimensions of themselves and extended themselves through their experiences in the peer-mentoring relationship. This experience confronted

them with a new understanding of the self, which assisted them in transcending the title or role ascribed to them as mentor or mentee.

Mentors could make the claim that they were mentors after having gone through the relational experience, indicating a step beyond being appointed as a mentor. The mentors claimed the role as mentors as a result of the self-affirmation inspired by the mentoring relationship, and reconstructed themselves as parental figures and 'big brothers' and 'big sisters' through the mentoring dyads. Mentors, especially in these roles, thus contributed significantly towards a less traumatic and more accepting transition of the mentees in the current research.

Mentors were seen to develop confidence and they started to mentor each other. Mentees even 'mentored' mentors by becoming a confidant or protector of the mentor from mentee abuse. In the process, mentees developed co-ownership of the mentoring relationship and at times assumed the role of significant other to the mentors. In my reading of the literature, this is an understanding that is not common to peer mentoring in higher education.

The insight of mentors and mentees being future-directed did not feature in the literature consulted. Both mentees and mentors developed an understanding that their input in the mentoring relationship had an impact beyond the immediate. Mentees started to emulate mentors and expressed the wish to become mentors in the future. Like the mentors, they also wanted to share what they had gained with future first-year students. Mentors imagined themselves becoming postgraduate students, lecturers and head mentors in the future. They attributed their future-directedness to their experience and growth in the mentoring relationship. This came across as a type of relational attribution with the mentoring dyad acting as a locus of causality.

9.3.2.4 Transition to higher education

The notion of transition is a key concept in the current research. It featured both as a form of awareness and of mentors as agents of change in the mentoring dyad. Mentors, and to a lesser degree mentees, experienced themselves as agents of change. It was through a relational experience and understanding of their value and capacity to effect change through action that they adopted the role of agents of change. They believed that they could bring about change in the transition process for first-year students and they succeeded in doing so. They also transformed themselves and the mentees in the dyadic process of mediating transition to

higher education. The notion of being agents of change is not new in mentoring research. In my study there was found to be a shift from transition for participation (sometimes leading to high drop-out rates) to transition for success. Hence mentees could reflect and say with confidence that they now knew how to study at university. This power of agency of both mentors and mentees emerged from the dyadic mentoring experience.

9.4 CRITIQUE OF RESEARCH

I have argued for the importance of a dyadic approach to mentoring throughout this study, not only because of the prevalence of single-view approaches in the literature on mentoring in higher education, but also because of the centrality of the mentoring relationship as a critical space in which transition becomes possible for first-year students at institutions of higher learning. The main thrust of my critique of this study would be to answer the question as to whether my study met the essential characteristics of dyadic research and what this means for higher education. I have taken this approach because the dyadic approach lies at the centre of my study and, if the centre gives way, the entire study collapses.

Thompson and Walker (1982), writing on the dyad as the unit of analysis, suggest five essential characteristics with which dyadic research must comply in order for it to be regarded as dyadic. I will now critique my research against these principles to ascertain to what extent it expresses all or some of these characteristics.

Firstly, Thompson and Walker (1982) state that the research problem must be conceptualised at the level of the relationship. My study asked how peer mentoring dyads contextualised in a residentially based mentoring programme facilitated student transition from high school to university. One of the critical questions asked how mentoring partners constructed themselves and their roles in a dyadic mentoring relationship. I consequently sought to explore the patterns between the dyadic partners. This made it possible to develop a deeper understanding of how the dyadic partners constructed themselves and the mentoring relationship. In terms of the first question, my research was compliant.

The second characteristics pointed out by Thompson and Walker (1982) asks if the sample of participants is contingent upon involvement in representative relationships. I purposefully selected participants involved in mentoring dyads from a formal programme to constitute the sample. My project was not a quantitative study; therefore representivity was not an issue.

However, the dyads came from a formal programme that engaged in peer mentoring as its core function. It is clear that the dyads depicted real mentoring practices at an institution of higher education. In terms of the second characteristic the study was correctly aligned.

Thirdly, regarding measurement, it is required that either one or both members be assessed on the self, other or the relationship. In my study there was no measurement. The important issue here is that the analysis was done by considering the perspectives of both parties (monadic analysis) as well as the relational perspective (dyadic analysis). The current research was compliant with the essential characteristic which demands focusing on the dyadic partners as well as the relationship.

In the fourth instance, Thompson and Walker (1982) require that the analysis be interpersonal, providing patterns between individuals in the relationship. The current research performed an interpersonal analysis which gave a dyadic relational perspective and understanding of the phenomenon being researched (mentoring). It can thus be concluded that this characteristic was also a feature of my study.

Finally, Thompson and Walker (1982) ask whether the data and implications refer to the relationship between the two dyadic partners. I conducted interviews with both partners and performed a dyadic analysis together with the partners involved in a relational context. It is clear from Chapters 7 and 8 that the analysis and discussions were focused on and informed by the lived relational experiences of the partners.

I conclude that the key components of my study were on the level of the dyad and that I focused on the mutual actions of the two people (mentor and mentee) as the unit of analysis or object of study. My study demonstrated a practical approach to dyadic research in peer mentoring and adopted these characteristics from Thompson and Walker (1982) for consideration and further investigation by other practitioners and theorists in the field of mentoring in higher education.

9.5 STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

In this study, I attempted to address the lacunae identified in Chapter 1. At the centre of the current research is the mentoring dyad representing the mentoring relationship. By adopting a bi-perspective approach to exploring the mentoring relationship, the research attempted to move away from traditional research that explored mentor or mentee experiences in isolation.

I adopted the Thompson and Walker (1982) requirements for dyadic research and also developed a dyadic approach from Eisikovits and Koren (2010) to conduct this study. I argue that my approach can be adopted, adapted and tested as an original contribution to the field of study.

I used a social constructionist framework, supported by relational cultural theory, in my study. This was an initial response to the concern raised in the literature consulted that mentoring research in general was not theoretically framed. A further development was the exploration of psychosocial theories and extracting concepts from these to assist with the data analysis and interpretation. The data suggested a further theoretical lens, namely the African philosophy of Ubuntu. This attempt at introducing and exploring theory culminated in a theoretical framework for peer mentoring that was applied in the analysis and interpretation of the data. This framework (see Figure 5.2) can be applied on a practical level to inform mentoring programmes. It can also be tested and improved to explore peer mentoring in higher education on a conceptual and theoretical level.

This theoretical framework for researching peer-mentoring dyads in higher education was the culmination point of my study, conceptually bringing together the various aspects derived from the literature, psychosocial theoretical perspectives, and methodological perspectives. The resultant integrated unit of analysis is one theoretically framed by social constructionism and relational theory, thus providing the broad overarching vantage points as well as the notion of Ubuntu that emerged from my study.

I also developed an approach to the process of dyadic mentoring-research analysis that was adapted from the literature on family research. As demonstrated in my research, this approach to analysis, which is based on the concept of interdependence, allows the researcher to explore the dyadic relationship as a locus of influence, placing in perspective the mentoring relationship as a complex human interaction. I then concluded the dyadic perspective by raising the notion of relational attribution as a possible explanation of the actions and growth of the mentoring partners.

In my exploration of the psychosocial theories, I adapted the notion of social exchange to that of social interchange as being more appropriate to mentoring given its reciprocal nature as borne out by the data. From role-model theory a shift to role-model immediacy was

emphasised. The seemingly paradoxical idea of vulnerability as a strength was adopted from relational cultural theory and explored in the current research.

I adapted the Freirian concept of conscientization and reformulated it in my study as mentoring as social conscientization to explain the awareness of commitment and service as a reciprocal outcome of my data. The reformulated concept was then linked to the notion of Ubuntu and used to explain mentoring as social cohesion and presented as other-directedness. It is this concern for the other that moved the dyadic partners to express their readiness to replicate their experiences to help others, which introduced mentoring as a self-perpetuating practice of possibility that is future directed.

I also discovered the emergence of a notion of a critical period for transition from school to higher education. This was framed by the position supported in this research that the institutions of higher learning have a responsibility to facilitate this transition process for first-year students. The mentors became critical agents of change by assisting first-year students to make this transition. Critical to this transition was the ability to understand the inside story or culture of the institution. Universities are thus challenged to revisit their institutional culture and practices.

Finally, I located my research in a formal programme in a university residence. This is one of a few research projects conducted in this context and thus it has made a contribution to the corpus of research in peer mentoring.

9.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Peer-mentoring research from a dyadic relational perspective seems to be very limited. It would therefore be of value if the current research could to be replicated at other institutions using the theoretical framework for peer mentoring that was designed and used in my research. This would create the opportunity to test and improve the framework for further application. The exploration of psychosocial theories could be extended to include friendship theory, family theory, and African philosophies and theories.

I would also like to suggest that the dyadic analysis approach as adapted and applied in the current research should be utilised and further developed in peer-mentoring research. This may enhance our understanding of the complexities of peer-mentoring relationships and

inform our institutional practices in developing peer-mentoring programmes for transition to higher education.

The impact of institutional culture on the transition of first-year students could also be explored. This would place institutions in a position to adapt, change or set up support structures and programmes to facilitate student transition and success in the first year. Consequently, a more accommodating and welcoming institutional transition-positive culture might develop.

Peer-mentoring practioners in higher education can draw on my research for the development of peer-mentoring programmes and the training of the participants in these programmes.

Finally, potential researchers could trace mentors and mentees in a longitudinal study into other structures at university and beyond to examine the long-term effect of their dyadic mentoring experiences in the programme. This information could be fed back into mentoring and training programmes to improve mentoring practices.

9.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this research I aimed to explore mentoring in a relational context, recognising the complexity of relationships as sites of mutual causality. I also attempted to introduce theoretical frameworks and psychosocial theories, not merely as lenses but to build a Polaroid lens, as a means of excluding "noise" or distracting reflections in an attempt to gain a better understanding of peer mentoring as a mechanism and organic process for transition to higher education. I therefore hope that my study will act as an incentive to other researchers to take some of the ideas and contributions forward to advance our understanding of peer mentoring and to develop new and better ways of exploring this practice.

My study has been a growth-promoting experience for me. The challenges and frustrations have also brought about excitement and hope. In conclusion, I hope that this small contribution will feed into a larger scholarship on peer mentoring and serve those who hope, on entering institutions of higher learning for the first time, to realise their dreams.

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APPENDIX 1A

REFLECTION A (CHAPTER 6)

I have engaged with the literature on research rigour from the perspective of the qualitative data underpinning my research and have identified three different stances or approaches. There are those who believe that one should apply quantitative research terminology as is (that is, unchanged); those who hold that the terminology needs to be transformed to be paradigm sensitive or appropriate; and those who argue that there is no standard set of criteria to apply to qualitative research as it is too varied. After comparing the three stances, I decided to shun the two extreme or radical views in support of the moderate and flexible middle view which, I believe, is in keeping with the nature of qualitative research.

Next, I re-visited my research context and selected what I considered to be the criteria and techniques appropriate to my research. My concern was that my choices might have been influenced by personal bias, which demanded that I look at the views or models of writers in the literature and apply their criteria to my research. I realised that I needed to choose from these potential models and then then selected three writers. Two are current and the classical texts of Guba & Lincoln. These I have then applied to my research and, compared with my initial choice of criteria. I am convinced that I have complied with the validity demands of the project. This is clear from the in vivo approach and the utilization of the techniques discussed and the application of the three models as set out in this chapter.

V Bosman

APPENDIX 1B

MY REFLECTIONS ON 9 NOVEMBER 2010 [POSSIBLE PREFACE TO CHAPTER 4]

In an attempt to find a way of performing a dyadic (interactive) analysis of the data, I had to consider the following questions:

How does one develop a deeper understanding of the mentoring relationship without exploring and experiencing it at first hand? How does one make sense of the mentor or mentee scripts as a mere onlooker or outsider? We persuade ourselves into creating the interpreted script, which represents only the etic perspective, which is at least one step removed from the observed experience or relationship.

This reminded me of myself as a child looking at a pocket watch. The rear had a transparent cover, so one could observe but not touch the inner workings of the watch—that is, one could touch but not enter and open but not become part of the mechanism of the watch. Indeed, all I could do was to observe, marvel at the workings of the watch, and wonder how it could keep time with such incredible precision. However, over a period of time, the observations through the glass cover made it possible for me to form an idea of how time was being measured. Similarly, it is only by observing the interrelationships between people that we can begin to understand their real nature and import.

This is my frustration at this stage as I look at the transcriptions "through" the glass panel of my laptop, never to be part of them, but attempting and expecting to make perfect academic sense of them, to say what makes them tell the time "every time". How did the mentoring happen every time? And how did the "dyadic mechanism" keep on ticking in spite of my looking on and the challenges that surrounded it?

V Bosman

APPENDIX 2

RESPONDENT CONSENT FORM

Project title: First-year student mentoring programme research project

Researcher: V. Bosman

The purpose of the study is to research mentoring dyads as a mechanism for assisting first-year university students living in residence ("hostel") to make the transition from high school to university. This formed part of my research towards a doctoral degree in education. Students who are part of the residential mentoring programme are invited to participate in the research by making themselves available for an interview. Participation is entirely voluntary and the identity of the participants will be protected. All information will be treated confidentially and used exclusively for research purposes. The interview will explore the role of the participants and their experience of the mentoring programme. The information collected in the course of this study will not be made available to any person other than the researcher. All data will be kept secure in the personal care of the researcher in his off-campus office.

Respondent statement:

By signing and dating this document I understand that:

- no information obtained during this study will be linked to my name;
- I understand that I will not receive any payment for participation in this study;
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

Respondent: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher contact details: V. Bosman (Cell: 0822006972)

APPENDIX 3

EXAMPLE OF QUESTIONS ASKED DURING SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Questions extracted from different audiotaped interviews

Tape 1	Tape 2	Tape 3	Tape 4
Welcome the interviewee. What are your feelings about the programme? How has the programme helped you? Have you benefitted from it in any way? How did it help you academically? You say it motivated you - how? How would you describe a relationship with a mentor? How are you performing academically? How did the programme assist you academically? Why do some members not attend tutoring sessions? How can you make a contribution to the programme? Should you select your own mentor, or should I do it? Do you keep notes/journal/diary? How often do you have meetings? What happens in these	How do you feel about the programme? Why do you visit your mentor? Has the programme helped you academically? Own growth/development → Have you grown as a person? What are the things you worked on in the programme? Do you think you can help other mentees? Do you write/reflect in your journals? How should we select new mentors? Why should I select you as a mentor? Should the programme remain compulsory? Should you choose your own mentors? Is there anything you want to share with me in closing?	How do you feel about the programme? What kinds of assistance are needed? Do you meet regularly? What is the nature of the meetings? What happens at the meetings? How do you feel about your mentor's advice? Have you passed some of your modules? What helped you to change your mind about dropping out? When do I get mentors next year? Who would like to be a mentor? How do you see your role in the programme? How would you explain your relationship with other mentees? Do you have any conflict and, if so, how do you deal with it? Any low lights? Relationship with your mentor? Explain what you mean	General feelings about the programme? Highlights? Lowlights? What is this "recognition" to mentor? Why do some mentees not attend meetings? Relationship with the rest of the mentees? Have you benefited from programme? If so, how? What is the main thing that happened in your life? Suggestions for last four months of programme? Should we keep the programme next year? How can we improve the programme? Where do we get mentors next year? What criteria for mentors do I look for?

meetings? Why do the members stay so long in the meetings? What was your greatest learning experience in this programme? What do you expect from the programme for the next four months? Where do next the group of mentors come from? What could you do as a mentor next year? If you want to be a mentor next year, why should you be selected?		by participation. Any concluding remarks? How have you grown - developed/changed? Any famous last words?	Do you have a journal? Should mentees have journals?

APPENDIX 4

LIST OF CODES

Code-Filter: All

HU: PhD2011AnalysisDyads

File: [C:\Users\user\Documents\Scientific Software\ATLASti\TextBank\PhD2011AnalysisDyads.hpr6]

Edited by: Super Date/Time: 2013/07/07 11:11:44 AM

1st year students	
academic support	personal growth
affirmation	portfolio
appreciation	power
availability	pressure
belongingness(sense of belonging)	prior mentoring experience
caring	recognition
closeness	reflecting
compassion	relationship
concern for mentor with reference to time and pressure	respect
empathy	responsibility
emulate	role model
encouragement	self-concept
family	selflessness
friendship	shared responsibility
future mentor	sharing
growth	skills
identify	socialising
inspires	spiritual
intermentoring	support psychosocial
involvement	time management
meeting new people	transition
mentor benefit	trust
mentor impact	
negative mentor experience	

APPENDIX 5

QUOTATIONS-MEMOS AND CODES (2 PAGES OF 10 AS EXAMPLE)

All current quotations (166). Quotation-Filter: All (extended version)

HU: PhD2011AnalysisDyads

File: [C:\Users\user\Documents\Scientific Software\ATLASti\TextBank\PhD2011AnalysisDyads.hpr6]

Edited by: Super

Date/Time: 2012/03/18 10:57:04 AM

P 1: Interview 1 mentor rtf Cocortf.rtf - 1:1 [we more on the social part of ..] (13:13) (Super)

Codes: [1st years] [transition]

Memos: [ME - 2012/03/09 [22]]

> we more on the social part of it, trying to get the firstyears to adapt to residency and university life. So but I never had really encourage … the only time there was a meeting there was something, they would bring up the mentors, they would thank the mentors for their contribution to the residence uhm, they get one of the mentors to say something anytime we have a meeting. I think we really worked nice at a level that I thought we would not

Memos:

> **MEMO: ME - 2012/03/09 [22] (Super, 2012/03/09 04:20:30 PM)**
>
> Type: Memo
>
> Welcoming 1st years and getting them to adapt.

P 1: Interview 1 mentor rtf M1.rtf - 1:2 [I know how it is to be a first..] (17:17) (Super)

Codes: [1st years]

No memos

I know how it is to be a first year at, in foreign places especially coming straight from high school … so really I can teach you a little bit of what I know, what I've experienced, maybe I can give it to you.

P 1: Interview 1 mentor rtf M1rtf.rtf - 1:7 [I am a mother, I am a sister, ..] (53:53) (Super)

Codes: [caring]

Memos: [ME - 2012/03/10 [4]]

I am a mother, I am a sister, I am a guardian

Memos:

MEMO: ME - 2012/03/10 [4] (Super, 2012/03/10 08:49:37 AM)

Type: Memo

Redefining herself in the contextual experience of the programme relationships. Becoming a new person. Growing and expanding her role.

P 1: Interview 1 mentor rtf M1rtf.rtf - 1:11 [So whenever you think that you...] (53:53) (Super)

Codes: [personal growth] [relationship]

Memos: [ME - 2012/03/10 [6]]

So whenever you think that you know a lot, you actually don't until you visit to other peoples life, learn things from other people, other peoples experience

Memos:

MEMO: ME - 2012/03/10 [6] (Super, 2012/03/10 09:05:17 AM)

Type: Memo

WE learn in relational context. The lives of others inform our own life. This is an important insight for mentoring as you learn from mentees as well and need to become the temporary mentee in the relationship in order to learn- role shifting- as when this happens the mentee experiences a sense of recognition and realises the mentor can be the beneficiary- role reversal and power shift within the relationship.

P 1: Interview 1 mentor rtf M1rtf.rtf - 1:14 [I'm taking students from the g..] (68:68) (Super)

Codes: [1st years] [transition]

Memos: [ME - 2012/03/10 [8]]

I'm taking students from the gate to the reception, you taking them from campus to here which you are supposed to do,

Memos:

MEMO: ME - 2012/03/10 [8] (Super, 2012/03/10 09:22:05 AM)

Type: Memo

Welcoming students. Making them feel at home, belong and showing them the way. Caring for them when they feel lost. This first encounter with the university and with you is the first phase of transition. You convert their physical transition into a socio-emotional one. Developing a sense of attachment to university.

P 2: Interview 2 mentee Mnt2.rtf - 2:1 [uhm the programme, its was ver..] (11:11) (Super)

Codes: [1st years] [meeting new people]

No memos

uhm the programme, its was very nice at first having to meet new people and coming from a different Province, having to know other people's … and it has helped me with my work

P 2: Interview 2 mentee Mnt2.rtf - 2:4 [mm, it like I have someone to ..] (47:47) (Super)

Codes: [sharing] [support psycho social] [trust]

Memos: [ME - 2011/11/16 [4]]

mm, it like I have someone to like talk to

Memos:

MEMO: ME - 2011/11/16 [4] (Super, 2011/11/16 01:41:20 PM)

Type: Memo

qualifies closeness with someone to talk to. No longer alone or out on his own, has support, someone to trust and to share with-personal stuff, someone to be vulnerable with

P 2: Interview 2 mentee Mnt2.rtf - 2:12 [the stand out was good, its ju..] (155:155) (Super)

Codes: [power] [sharing] [skills] [socialising]

Memos: [ME - 2011/11/16 [7]]

when we have our meetings, we have cake, tea and stuff like that so me having to, there was a time that I had to buy the stuff, so it help me organize, I kind of like hosted something, a function which is like a first time.

Memos:

MEMO: ME - 2011/11/16 [7] (Super, 2011/11/16 02:05:56 PM)

Type: Memo

Mentee takes the initiative, control and in charge. Learns to organise and feels good about it. This is made possible by the mentor who creates the space and opportunity.

APPENDIX 6

TABLE OF CODES FOR ALL PRIMARY DOCUMENTS (TRANSCRIPTIONS)

CODES-PRIMARY-DOCUMENTS-TABLE (CELL=Q-FREQ)

Report created by Super - 2013/07/09 01:44:09 PM

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Code-Filter: All [47]

PD-Filter: All [8]

Quotation-Filter: All [160]

	PRIMARY DOCS								
CODES	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**Totals**
1st years	3	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	10
academic support	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	5
Affirmation	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Appreciation	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Availability	0	0	3	2	1	3	0	1	10
Belongingness	0	1	1	3	1	0	0	0	6
Caring	2	1	2	4	1	1	0	0	11
Closeness	0	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	6
Compassion	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
concern for mentor w	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Empathy	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Emulate	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	4
Encouragement	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	4
Family	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
Friendship	0	0	1	6	2	2	0	0	11
future mentor	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Growth	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Identify	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Inspires	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
inter-mentoring	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Involvement	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
meeting new people	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
mentor benefit	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
mentor impact	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	4
negative mentor expe	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
personal growth	6	3	3	0	4	4	1	0	21

	PRIMARY DOCS								
CODES	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**Totals**
Portfolio	2	2	2	0	5	0	0	0	11
Power	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
Pressure	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	4
prior mentor experie	0	0	1	0	8	0	0	0	9
Recognition	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	7
Reflecting	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	6
Relationship	3	3	3	0	7	3	4	1	24
Respect	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Responsibility	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
role model	0	0	4	0	3	0	0	1	8
self concept	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	4
Selflessness	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
shared responsibility	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sharing	2	4	2	1	2	1	0	0	12
Skills	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Socialising	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Spiritual	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
support psycho socia	0	3	4	3	0	0	0	1	11
time management	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Transition	3	0	3	3	0	5	1	5	20
Trust	0	3	0	0	2	2	0	2	9
Totals	41	33	63	29	48	25	11	18	268

APPENDIX 7

RESIDENTIAL MENTORING PROGRAMME

Title

First-Year Residential Mentoring Programme

Goals

- facilitate transition of first-year students from school to tertiary education
- provide psychosocial support
- provide academic support
- facilitate student growth and development

Nature/Description of programme

The programme is compulsory for all the first-year students in residence.

Mentors apply for a period of one academic year

Each mentor supports about 10 students both academically and psychosocially. The mentors also introduce mentees to all campus activities (sport, culture, etc.) and arrange activities in residence for mentees

Target group

- All first-year students in residence from all the faculties at the university
- All student mentors on the programme (2^{nd} and 3^{rd} year students)

Programme components

- Training workshops for mentors –developmental and formative
- Weekly meeting with all mentors and programme coordinators
- Fortnightly meeting of all head mentors (4) with programme coordinator
- Fortnightly meeting of all head mentors (4) with mentors assigned to her or him about 10 per head mentor)
- Mentors and mentees meet at least twice per month as a group

- Mentors and mentees meet as the need determines (individual needs addressed)
- Mentors and mentees participate in residential and broader university activities, e.g. carnival, HIV/AIDS programme, and sports events.

Management system

- Director of Residences and Catering Services
- Programme Coordinator
- Residence Coordinators
- Head Mentors

Duration of programme

- one academic year after which the programme is formally concluded with an end-of-year function after which the new advertisements for applications are published

APPENDIX 8

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT IN WHICH THE RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED

The institutional context of the research study was that of a national university which, prior to the advent of the democratic dispensation in 1994, was one of many historically disadvantaged and underfunded institutions shaped and constrained by the racist policies of the previous apartheid regime. It consequently attracted first generation higher education students from poor backgrounds countrywide. This has led to the development of a good understanding of and relationship with its student communities, as well as the provision of student support programmes of which the residential mentoring programme of my research is an example.

In the first-year residences males and females reside on different floor levels within the same residences subject to strict access control measures. Various activities are provided on campus. Several faculties have designed special programmes to assist educationally disadvantaged students.

A growing number of foreign students is becoming part of the student demographics due to the admissions policy of the institution, which has fostered strong continental and intercontinental ties. This has created a context of a multiversity that is both enriching and challenging, especially to mentoring initiatives such as the residential mentoring programme that formed the context of my study.

Finally, the complex demographics of the student population, together with the effects of the institutionalised educational discrimination practices of the previous regime, have resulted in a range of psychosocial problems and disparate levels of student preparedness which posed a special challenge to the mentoring programme within the dynamic context of my study.

APPENDIX 9

KEY WORDS

The following concepts are explained as they are used in this study. Concepts that are not made clear at this point are explicated as they occur as the dissertation unfolds.

Dyad

This is a relationship consisting of two parties.

Intermentoring

This is a social practice where a mentor is mentoring another mentor, especially as related to the proposed study.

Intersubjectivity

The term denotes a relationship where both members interact on equal terms as human subjects and their agency is observed. In the case of the mentoring dyad, for example, the mentee is not merely the passive recipient of a "mentoring act" whose primary purpose to "re-machine" and fit the mentee into the mechanism of the organisational machine as discussed in this study. On the contrary, the mentee becomes the key element in the construction of the jointly developed social reality and takes responsibility for his or her self-formation.

Mutual causality

Reciprocal relationships that occur in a mentoring context challenge unidirectional causality, which presumes that "every phenomenon can be understood in terms of an antecedent cause which can be separated from the effect and the context in which it occurs'" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 2002: 258). In cases like these, mutual causality is also referred to as reciprocal-effect causality that is "simultaneous" (Neuman 2003:56).

In this study, the members of the dyad could therefore mutually cause effects, one on the other, in this manner.

Peer

Peers are people in a similar position to each other in terms of status, role and age. In my case it was a fellow student.

Reciprocal relationship

A relationship in which the parties do or give the same things to each other especially by responding and acting in such a manner that both members in the dyad gain from the mentoring process and grow and develop.

Relational theory

A theory developed by the Stone Centre which offers a view that relationships are mutually inter-active processes as opposed to being instrumental activities that subscribe to notions of the individuated self. Relational theory has developed from a self-in-relation model to a model of relational development.

Role model

A person who is admired in terms of conduct, attitude, personal approach and style to the extent that someone wants to base his of her life or aspects thereof on the admired individual.

Self-actualisation

A concept borrowed from Maslow's hierarchy of needs (in Papalia & Olds 1992:33–34) that expresses the need to realise one's full potential. In the context of this study, it is the movement towards this state made by the self. This is therefore a dynamic concept as nobody is "ever completely self-actualized; the healthy person is always moving up to levels that are even more fulfilling" (Papalia & Olds 1992:33). Self-actualisation is chosen ahead of the term empowerment which has the implication of a relationship of inequality (empowered vs disempowered) as located in a deficiency paradigm.

The notion of self-actualisation "agentises" the person and is consonant with the approach taken in this study.

Social action

According to Weber (1981:159), "Social action [is present] wherever human action is subjectively related in meaning to the behavior of others".

Stone Center

The Stone Center was founded in 1981 with a grant from Grace W. and Robert S. Stone. The centre is dedicated to the prevention of psychological problems, the enhancement of psychological well-being, and the search for a more comprehensive understanding of human development across culturally diverse populations. It focuses on research, education and community outreach. The centre also provides counselling programmes to Wellesly College students in Wellesly, Massachusetts.

Transformation

In the context of this proposed study, transformation refers to the extent to which the person has changed to function psychosocially and academically at the institution. From the perspective of the institution, it is asked how the programme has contributed towards the change in terms of aspects of student leadership and residence management.

APPENDIX 10

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29 October 2014

EDITOR'S DECLARATION

I certify that I have edited the dissertation entitled *A Dyadic Analysis of Undergraduate Peer-Mentoring Relationships in the Context of a Formal Peer-Mentoring Programme at a University Residence* submitted to me by Mr Vincent Bosman, and that I believe the language and style of the document to be of a sufficiently high standard to warrant submission of the dissertation for examination.

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